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Music Early Learning Programs: Parental beliefs, aspirations and participation

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Abstract

In recent years there has been a proliferation of formal music programs available to families with young children. Little is known about the reasons why parents attend these programs, what they hope to gain by attending, or if attendance shapes the way they use music in the home.

Concurrently, advances in digital technology have revolutionised the way we engage with music, as well as the way we receive and understand new and existing information. Additionally, the popular media provides parents with information of the 'science' behind music and early learning, and its positive impact on early childhood development. These changes have coincided with a period in which access to arts education has decreased. While all parents have the potential to use music to support their parenting current understanding of how we experience music, and its impact on childhood development, may lead some parents to question their own potential to be musical in their everyday parenting, and see them turning to 'experts' for support.

This study researches parental beliefs, aspirations and use of music in the home from participation in Music Early Learning Programs (MELPs). It also seeks to identify those structures of MELPs that support parenting in the home. The investigation was conducted through a constructivist research paradigm and a contextualist framework. Ethnographic methods, including interviews, observations, written and video diaries are combined with the relational qualities of narrative inquiry to present five narrative case studies.

Findings identified four themes and 10 subthemes pertaining to reasons parents attended MELPs, and what they hope to achieve through their attendance, and six MELP structures that shaped the way parents used music in the home. Three strategic uses of these structures were further identified.

The themes identified for attending MELPs and parental hopes included: a high value for music, shaped by both positive and negative musical experienced in their own childhoods, or a lack of music education. A high value for music as a tool for child development was also an identified theme, with music for cognitive, language, communication, emotional and social skill development identified as subthemes, along with music as therapy. Parents identified that they attended music programs to foster and enrich family relationships, family time at home and family rituals. Finally, parents attended MELPS to access social support from other adults.

MELP participation shaped the way music was used in the home by providing structures and content that parents learnt and applied at home and in their parenting. MELP attendance provided a mechanism to support parents to incorporate music as part of home routines, rituals, and transitions,

as well as a tool for regulation and to scaffold learning. This was achieved by emulating the MELP structures of: voice leading; using a large repertoire of songs; interacting via different musical modes; attuning to the child's needs and assisting with emotional regulation; using music to structure behaviour; and increased confidence to improvise in the moment. Parents used these structures strategically at home by singing. They then used song and music making and engagement for regulation and to scaffold learning. How they used these structures was shaped by their own childhood experiences of music, their sense of being a musical person, their identity as a musical parent, the ways in which they value music, and their belief of what being musical means.

This research advances the fields of music education, music therapy and music early learning, including early childhood education, by contributing new knowledge and understanding about the reasons why parents invest in music early learning for their children and by identifying the potential role of the MELP to support and empower parents in their parenting. Currently there are no legislative guidelines on what constitutes a MELP, or any minimum training qualifications required to conduct one. This research provides a working definition of a MELP, and identifies the structures that parents draw from well-designed MELPS that support their parenting in strategic ways. It also highlights the important role of MELP facilitators in supporting age-appropriate music and early childhood music pedagogy to enhance parent-child musical interactions

Recommendations arising from the research include the need for clear practice and policy guidelines indicating what constitutes a MELP and the minimum level of training required to design and run a MELP. Further research recommendations include investigating the possible impact of MELPs on parent mental health, particularly in light of the busy lives parents lead; the capacity of a MELP to empower parents to teach their children about self-regulation; the ways that parenting impacts music identity, and the role of technology in supporting parents to use music in the home.

Declaration by author

This thesis is composed of my original work, and contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference has been made in the text. I have clearly stated the contribution by others to jointly-authored works that I have included in my thesis.

I have clearly stated the contribution of others to my thesis as a whole, including statistical assistance, survey design, data analysis, significant technical procedures, professional editorial advice, and any other original research work used or reported in my thesis. The content of my thesis is the result of work I have carried out since the commencement of my research higher degree candidature and does not include a substantial part of work that has been submitted to qualify for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution. I have clearly stated which parts of my thesis, if any, have been submitted to qualify for another award.

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Publications during candidature

Peer-reviewed journal articles

Williams, Kate E., Barrett, Margaret S., Welch, Graham F., **Abad, Vicky** and Broughton, Mary. (2015). Associations between early shared music activities in the home and later child outcomes: findings from the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 31* (2), 113-124. doi:10.1016/j.ecresq.2015.01.004.

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Invited Keynote presentations and papers during candidature

Abad, V. (2016). Music Therapy in Early Intervention and Special Education in Australia: Looking back and looking forward, a new angle on music therapy for families. *Keynote presentation at the 1st SPED-Music Therapy Conference, Singapore, 3&5th September, 2016.*

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Abad, V. (2016). Early Childhood Training: Musical Beginnings. *Invited Speaker at the Association for Music Therapy Singapore (AMTS) Pre-Conference Teacher Training, September 1-2, 2016.*

Abad, V. (2016). Early Childhood Training: Musical interactions between parent and child. *Invited Speaker at the Association for Music Therapy Singapore (AMTS) Pre-Conference Teacher Training, September 1-2, 2016.*

Abad, V. (2016). Early Childhood Training: Musical Milestones – mapping against childhood development. *Invited Speaker at the Association for Music Therapy Singapore (AMTS) Pre-Conference Teacher Training, September 1-2, 2016.*

Abad, V. (2016). Early Childhood Training: Music and toddler development. *Invited Speaker at the Association for Music Therapy Singapore (AMTS) Pre-Conference Teacher Training, September 1-2, 2016.*

Abad, V. (2016). Early Childhood Training: Music in the kindergarten years. *Invited Speaker at the Association for Music Therapy Singapore (AMTS) Pre-Conference Teacher Training, September 1-2, 2016.*

Abad, V. (2016). Early Childhood Training: Music and families: Music Early Learning Program. *Invited Speaker at the Association for Music Therapy Singapore (AMTS) Pre-Conference Teacher Training, September 1-2, 2016.*

Abad, V. (2016). Early Childhood Training: Music and Self-regulation. *Invited Speaker at the Association for Music Therapy Singapore (AMTS) Pre-Conference Teacher Training, September 1-2, 2016.*

Abad, V. (2016). Early Childhood Training: Music in the pre-school, adapting for children with special needs. *Invited Speaker at the Association for Music Therapy Singapore (AMTS) Pre-Conference Teacher Training, September 1-2, 2016.*

Abad, V. (2015). Taking music to the community to enhance family function, maintain family wellness and enhance child development. What I take as a music therapist. *Invited speaker at the Australian Music Therapy Association Professional Development Seminar, Sydney, August, 2015.*

Abad, V. (2015). *Invited panel speaker at the Australian Music Therapy Association Professional Development Seminar, Sydney, August, 2015.*

Abad, V. (2014). The Economics of Therapy. *Invited workshop presenter at the Australian Music Therapy Association Professional Development Seminar, Brisbane, August, 2014.*

Abad, *V*. (2014). Invited *panel speaker at the 40th Australian Music Therapy Association Annual Conference, Brisbane, August, 2014.*

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Thomas, D., & **Abad, V.** (2013). *The Economics of Therapy*. Online conference for Music Therapy, 2013.

Publications included in this thesis

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Contributions by others to the thesis

The conception and design of the research project was established by Professors Barrett and Welch for their Australian Research Council Discovery Project DP130102488 *"Being and becoming musical: towards a cultural ecological model of early musical development" (Barrett & Welch, 2013-2015).* This ARC had two major strands. The current PhD study sits within the second strand, and looks specifically at Music Early Learning Programs. This strand of the research is the "Musical parenting, musical play" strand 2.2. I was invited to join the research team as an RHD student and complete my PhD as part of this process.

The research presented in the thesis, including data collection and analysis is original and was conducted solely by me. The analysis and interpretation of the findings in my thesis have been overseen and therefore supported by my supervisors Professor Margaret Barrett and Professor Graham Welch.

Professor Barrett remains an influential mentor in my professional life. As the key supervisor of this thesis, and a mentor to my professional work, her thoughts and feedback have helped me to frame my thoughts and writing immensely.

Statement of parts of the thesis submitted to qualify for the award of another degree

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To my family:

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Ten years ago this research journey began, when my own daughter was born. It began because I wanted a very specific experience for her, and I couldn't find it. I never imaged that a single music group would grow into the business it is now and lead to this research. Equally, I could never have imaged that my daughter would grow into the beautiful, talented and warm hearted child she is. In my daughter Arwen, I see hope for a world full of music and happiness. I thank my child for her endless hugs, her smiles, and the understandings that were beyond her young years at times.

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Keywords

MELP, music early learning, music therapy, early childhood, parent, childhood development

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FoR code: 1999, Other Studies in Creative Arts and Writing	50%

Table of Contents

List of figures and tables

List of Abbreviations used in the thesis

MELP	Music Early Learning Program
CS	Case Study
IDS	Infant Directed Speech
FCMT	family-centred music therapy
PUMIS	Parents' Use of Music with Infants Survey
PECs	Picture Exchange Communication System
ATSI	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
NSEB	Non-English Speaking Background

Prelude

When I became a mum, my role as musician and therapist took on a whole new light. Music accompanied every facet of my parenting, it felt like an extension of myself to sing through the days together. Even though music was central to our everyday, I was still very keen to take my baby to a music group, where I could be the mummy and she and I could share musical interactions together. I had tried a few but hadn't yet found what I was looking for. One autumn day I packed my baby into the car and off we went to trial our final music group to see if this was what I was looking for. On this particular day I realised I wouldn't find what I was looking for because it didn't exist.

I left this final music group feeling sad. I was sad not just for me, but for the other women too because the group was not what I was led to believe it would be. The teacher did not sing in key, she used recorded music to engage and interact with babies who were too young and easily overstimulated. There were too many layers of noise, colour, texture, backing tracks, and a complete lack of the personal attention that music so beautifully invites. In short, there was no support for the musical interactions that I knew music could inspire. I wondered if the other women knew this too. Without the expert knowledge I had, did they know the potential power that music had to provide a moment in time for a mother and her child to simply 'be'? Did they know how to take delight in each other, to share musical interactions, and laugh, touch, smile, all within the music? This would require a program that understood more than early childhood development alone. It would require an understanding of the musical development of infants, the power of music to act as an agent for communication and attachment between a mother and a child, a highly skilled musician, and an informed group leader, who could empower the mothers to take home the music learned and use it with their babies in their everyday interactions.

As I looked around the room I wondered why the other mothers were here – did they hope to achieve the same things as me - to have fun, to be with their child in the musical moment? Did they believe the music program's marketed promises that attending this music group would lead to smarter children? Did they think this was the start of music education for their babies, at such a young age? Did they believe it would give their children a head start? In short, I wondered what motivated these parents to bring their babies to a music program, to dress them, pack them up, get them in the car, drive, unpack them from the car, go into the music room – so much planning, so much doing; and what did these parents hope to gain from attending? These classes were not inexpensive and I asked myself again what is it that these parents value that they will invest their time and resources in these classes?

At the same time, I had joined a local mother's group, and I now mixed with mothers as a mother, rather than as the 'therapist' who worked with mothers. Becoming a mother completely changed the way I approached my clinical work, it changed everything about me, including the way I observed other people's interactions with their babies. Previous to parenthood I established Australia's largest music therapy parent-child program 'Sing & Grow' for at-risk families. This program offered short term music therapy groups to families as a way of using musical interactions to help build stronger emotional attachments between parent and child and to support positive parenting in the home. In my role as National Director, and as a clinician, I viewed the work through an intervention lens - identifying issues that I could then address. Now, as a mother, I moved in circles where people didn't need 'addressing', and yet, I found these parents had the same concerns as all the parents I had ever worked with. They all wanted to be the best parent they could be, and they were seeking out information on how to do this. I noticed that musical interactions that underpin positive parent-child attachment were not always present in this new parenting circle either.

One day I took my guitar to our mothers' group and played a few children's songs for the babies and then improvised a tune that matched the group's mood. I ended this musical time by singing some lullabies. There was a lovely calmness in the room as many bubs went to sleep and mothers took a moment to relax and simply be. One mother asked me "what did you just do?" I explained I used the music to entrain with the babies and changed the pace, timbre, and my voice, to put them to sleep. We had a chat about how the mums could do this at home. At the end of the group the mother in question approached me and said "You should be charging us for that! That was sublime".

My personal and professional worlds had begun to collide. Of course they had always overlapped, but becoming a mother pushed this into overdrive. How naive I felt to admit that I had thought some parents would need help with this kind of attunement, and awareness, and not others. Sing & Grow funding meant that only parents identified as 'at-risk' could access the services. Where could mothers like the ones in my mothers' group go for advice and assistance? To me, I decided – I began offering one music group a week, which slowly built into my business.

My main motivation for starting this first group was to have a space for my own child to experience music making in the moment, with her parents (her dad brought her each week as I was now facilitating the group) but I could also see a need for women like myself, like the women in my mothers' group, like my husband, who all wanted to know more about tuning into their baby's needs. And I observed in my new day to day circles that many parents did not feel comfortable to

'just sing' at home with their little ones. This was another insightful moment for me: not everyone feels comfortable or confident to sing to their babies, and not everyone grew up in families where this was normal. I realised my comfort with using music as a parent didn't just come from my music training, it came from my childhood as well, where music was as much a part of our lives as attending school and playing sport.

Music was a core part of growing up for me. Led by my father, it accompanied pretty much everything we did. My dad was one of 12 children. They had very little, but they had music. My father had a beautiful voice, and he used to love listening to the music of his older siblings. He taught himself the guitar and was soon crooning to Elvis Presley and the Beach Boys. When he was a young man he formed a band 'Terry and the bandits' that became well known, and it was in this role as leader of the band that he met my mother at a local dance. She was not musical at all, and she loved the way music was woven into the very core of his family. When they created their own family, she ensured the same musical threads were present in our lives, her three children, of which I am the middle and only girl, and that we had access to music as part of our very being.

My father sang to each of us and played his guitar from before we can remember. Our weekends were spent with cousins, listening to our parents at the weekly BBQs we had, playing guitars and singing around a fire. As teenagers we joined in too, my older brother played the guitar and my younger brother and I sang. We knew all the songs from the 1950's and 60's better than we did the songs from our own generation. During these adolescent years, I became fascinated with how music supported my uncles and aunts to be together as they grew older. They would socialise through music, reminisce about their own childhoods, share stories of dances, sing and laugh together. This was in spite of the fact their childhood had been very hard and poverty-stricken. I noted how the younger generation could join in the singing and the story-telling that accompanied the songs hand-in-hand. These stories were part of our heritage, and would become part of our identity as we grew into adults. There were no gaps between the generations when we all sang and made music together.

By now I knew I wanted a career that involved music. I heard about music therapy when I was in Year 10 and I knew that was my calling. After a lifetime of immersion in live music but minimal classical training, I threw myself into formal music lessons to develop the required performance skills necessary to gain entry into the Queensland Conservatorium of Music, where I completed my undergraduate studies majoring in voice. I then went on to study music therapy at a postgraduate level. Throughout my training and career, I was constantly amazed at the power of music to bring

families together, through disease and adversity, loss and grief. I witnessed this across the lifespan, and found myself specialising in family music therapy, by establishing the Sing & Grow program.

After my daughter was born I found this fascination shifted to include all families, from all walks of life, broader than my previous intervention lens had focused on. When I returned to part time work at The University of Queensland, as a lecturer in music therapy, I began having regular discussions about this with my Head of School, Professor Margaret Barrett. Professor Barrett had already researched the benefits of attending music programs such as Kindermusik for families, and we shared a great passion for extending these understandings. At the time, Professor Barrett had submitted an ARC Discovery Grant proposal to extend and expand on her research findings. Her grant proposal was successful, and she invited me to join the team. I had completed my Masters Research degree looking at how attendance at music therapy groups supported young parents. I was keen to expand and look at how participation in a music group could support more families. My business was growing as my child was now in school, and this research opportunity would allow me to study the very thing I was so passionate about – supporting parents to use music in their homes and in their parenting through attending music groups. Such research would lead to support to all families, not just those who could access government funded programs or attended my business. I accepted the invitation and joined the research team.

This PhD is part of that ARC, and is the beginning of the next chapter of my life, and this thesis.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

1.1 Introduction

Parents use music, within their culture, to connect with, soothe, and teach their children about their cultural ways. For these reasons, music has been a part of human culture since the beginning of time. Research suggests they do this because they are biologically hard wired to communicate musically with their children (Malloch & Trevarthen, 2009; McPherson and Hallam, 2009). Much of this communication is conducted through singing.

In recent years, there has been a change in the ways young children experience music as part of their everyday lives. Both technological advances, coupled with social changes in the ways that parents work may be impacting on the kinds of music experiences children have. These include more exposure to recorded music via digital downloads, DVDs and children's 'edutainment', and less exposure to live music in the home as part of everyday experiences. The ways that children experience music outside of the home has been changing as well, with formalised music programs becoming more prevalent and available to parents for a fee. While there is some seminal research that investigates this outside home practice (Barrett, 2009; Pitts & Hargraves, 2016, 2017) there is still much to understand, including the reasons why parents attend and what they hope to achieve through attending.

This research study identifies and makes meaning of the reasons why and the ways in which parents invest in, and utilise music in their everyday lives, specifically through the analysis of participation in a Music Early Learning Program (MELP). This study sits within a larger national study formed by an ARC Discovery Grant that aims to investigate the role of music engagement in the lives of young (0-4 years) Australian children[1]. This comparatively large study is a unique opportunity to identify the pathways of music development through the lens of young children's everyday engagement with music in home, childcare and Music Early Learning settings.

1.2 Background to the research

Parents and caregivers are their children's first and most important teachers. As a society we are more aware now than ever before of the important influence parents have on positive and healthy early childhood development (Zubrick et al., 2008). Improvements in neuro-science technology have increased our understanding of how music can support early childhood development, and how this can support parents in their parenting roles. First, musical interactions observed between a

[1] Barrett & Welch, 2013–2016. *Being and becoming musical: Towards a cultural ecological model of early musical development.* Funded by the ARC Discovery program Grant no DP130102488

parent and child are present when there is a positive attachment between the dyad (Malloch, 1999; Malloch & Traverthen, 2009). Positive or secure attachment is paramount for an infant's early development, and sets them on a lifelong course for positive developmental and social outcomes (Ainsworth, 1982; Bowlby, 1988). Second, neuro-scientific advances have facilitated our understanding of how making music and learning music in childhood supports brain development and can improve developmental outcomes for children (Gerry, Unrau, & Trainor, 2012; Hallam, 2016).

For very young children, this music exposure has traditionally occurred in the home, where parents, and in particular mothers, sing (Custodero, Britto, & Brooks-Gunn, 2003; Trehub et al., 1997), and play musical games (Custodero, Britto, & Xin, 2002; Custodero et al., 2003; Custodero & Johnson-Green, 2003; Ilari, 2005; Johnson-Green & Custodero, 2002; Street, 2006) to bond, soothe and interact with their children (Rock, Trainor, & Addison, 1999; Trevarthen & Malloch, 2000;). Music is also used to accompany daily caregiving routines such as feeding, changing, bathing and bed times (Addessi, 2009; Barrett, 2009; Byrne & Hourigan, 2010; Johnson-Green & Custodero, 2002). This use of music as part of everyday parenting has been termed 'musical parenting' by Custodero and colleagues (2003). Little is known of the effect of formal music programs on music use in the home. In particular, identifying what structures, if any, assist parents in their musical parenting, and everyday music making at home, would be beneficial in light of the fact that high levels of shared music making in the home has long term positive developmental outcomes for children (Williams, Barrett, Welch, Abad & Broughton, 2015).

Changes in the ways children experience music represent a change in the socio-cultural practices of musical parenting and music practices (Campbell, 2011). These changes are not yet fully understood, nor are their implications to shared music practices in the home. Given that we come to understand our musical selves through the musical worlds of the home, family and neighbourhood into which we are born (Campbell, 2011), there are grounds for further research into the phenomena of how this cultural shift is impacting on parents and their use of music in their homes with their children.

1.3 Research questions

This study builds on previous research findings of Barrett (2009, 2011, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c, 2016a, 2016b, 2017in press) that have looked in-depth at the experiences of families in formal music groups, known as MELPs. This study builds on these by addressing the following three research questions and two sub-questions:

1. What reasons do parents provide for attending MELPs?
2. What do parents hope to gain by participating in a MELP
    a. for themselves?
    b. for their children?
3. How does participation in a MELP shape the way music is used at home?

To answer these research questions, a constructivist research paradigm was adopted and a contextualist framework used to allow for an 'everyday' research approach to occur within the socio-cultural lives of the children and their families. Ethnographic methods of emerging 'everyday' research (Tudge, 2008) were combined with the relational qualities of narrative inquiry (Barrett, 2009, 2011; Barrett & Stauffer, 2009a, 2012), and presented through a collection of narrative case studies (Stake, 2005).

1.4 Significance of the research

The larger ARC study and this study within it, addresses a significant gap in our understanding of how Australian families use music in their everyday lives and parenting. In particular, this study informs our understanding why parents are attending formal music programs by identifying the reasons they attend, what they hope to gain through attending, and the way attendance shapes their use of music in their everyday parenting. Such an understanding will inform the establishment of guidelines and policy on what constitutes a quality MELP, and how quality MELPs can support and empower parents to use music confidently at home. This is significant because we know from the research that increased music sharing at home can lead to better long term developmental outcomes for children (Williams et al., 2015).

1.5 The stance of the researcher

Aigen (2005) argues that qualitative research is imbedded in both the professional and personal contexts of the researcher, and therefore to wholly understand the research, it is necessary to understand the context of the researcher's experiences. For this reason, and in keeping with the qualitative research custom, I offered my story and how I came to be doing this research in the opening prelude. Below, the nature of the relationship between myself and the research participants is explained.

1.5.1 Nature of the relationship between the researcher and participants and its impact

This research study has allowed me to share the musical lives of 28 families and, in particular, to study closely five families who participated in the narrative case studies represented in this thesis.

The relationship I developed with these families was personal and personable. They invited me into their homes; we shared cups of tea and stories. I sang songs with their children, nursed some to sleep while we spoke in depth about their lives and musical experiences.

At these times I was the researcher, but I was also a mother, who could hold a baby, assist with lunch, understand a hardship and listen with empathy. At other times I was a music therapist and someone who conducted music groups similar to theirs, someone who understood their joy, their frustration, their hopes and aspirations.

I came to know these families intimately through attending their music programs, observing them interact with their children at these groups and through watching more than 500 video clips of musical moments shared in the home, in the night, during sickness and celebrations.

I participated in 14 interviews with them and listened to and read the transcripts many more times. This has equated to hundreds of hours of transcripts, diary entries and video clips, all of which capture musical moments in the homes and communities of these five families. It has been an honour and a privilege to share this journey with them, and to learn and grow and now share this knowledge with a wider audience through this research.

The experience of being the researcher in this study has changed the way I work. It has made me more reflective and aware of the personal stories that sit behind every family I work with. It has also changed me as a parent, making me cherish the musical moments in our lives all the more. I feel that I am a more reflective and thoughtful therapist, mother and person as a result of this research experience.

1.6 Outline of the research study

This thesis began with a prelude to tell the story of how I arrived at this point in time. This examination of my personal experiences, that culminated when my roles as mother, musician and music therapist collided; sets the scene for my personal involvement in the research and establishes reflexivity of practice. Chapter 1 provided an introduction to the area of research, and background to the research questions. These were then outlined, and the significance of the research, as well as its place within a larger ARC Discovery Grant study were outlined.

Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature pertaining to the research study. This begins with the theory that music is an evolutionary part of human development and research is presented from anthropological studies to support this, as well as scientific studies to support the use of music as a communicative and attachment tool for mothers and their babies. The use of music to support early

childhood emotional growth and development through parent-child interactions and play are discussed. The role of music in the family home and wider community is discussed and the role of music as an early education tool presented. Changes to the socio-cultural use of music with young children in recent times is debated and discussed in light of the rise of formal music learning programs for very young children. In response to this, the role of such programs in supporting parents to use music confidently is explored. The music early learning space is then reviewed and a working definition of what a MELP could be is presented.

Chapter 3 presents the methodology, methods and techniques used in this study. It commences by placing this methodology within a paradigm that supports everyday, culturally situated research to occur with young children. The methods are described in detail and explained within the context of the research paradigm. Data generation and analysis techniques are presented and discussed. The current study is outlined in regards to recruitment, context and design and the research questions are revisited. Finally, the five participant families are introduced, evaluation criteria outlined and ethical considerations debated.

Chapters 4 through to 8 present the findings of the study in the form of five narrative case studies outlining in detail the musical journeys and experiences of each family. Chapters 9 and 10 complete the thesis. In Chapter 9, the findings from the five narrative case studies are considered in a cross-case analysis. These findings are presented in an overview, and then discussed in more detail in relation to each of the three research questions. Chapter 10 provides the recommendations, outlined in regards to policy, practice and research and finishes with a conclusion.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This thesis makes meaning of the ways in which five parents invested in music and utilised it in their everyday lives through attendance at a formal music program, a practice that has increased in recent times. There is little understanding of the reasons parents attend these programs; what they hope to gain by participating; and how their attendance shapes their music use at home. This thesis aims to address these gaps in knowledge, beginning with a critical review of the literature pertaining to parent use of music, the evolution of this over time, and current day practices of music use both in the home and community.

To be human is to be musical. That is to say, all human beings are biologically equipped and genetically predisposed to being musical (Hodges, 2006). The capacity to generate and perceive musical information is a capacity that all humans possess and one we have been promoted to use for at least 50,000 years (McPherson, Davidson & Faulkner, 2012). Thus all parents have the potential and the neuro-biological structure to use music to connect and communicate with their children, and their children are born ready to interact musically with them.

2.2 Music and human evolution

Music is a central part of human life and is believed to have played an important evolutionary role in our species. There is clear archaeological evidence that shows musical behaviours have been a part of human life for many millennia, dating back at least to homo sapiens (Bannan & Woodward, 2009; Cross & Morley, 2009) and possibly even earlier (Mithen, 2007/2011; Trehub, Becker & Morley, 2015). From an evolutionary perspective, it is theorised that music has thrived in all human cultures, as it is believed to have favoured survival (Cross & Morley, 2009). At this level, music has provided two key advantages: the first is its ability to foster and support group identity and social cohesion (Mithen, 2007/2011), and the second is its ability to both strengthen the emotional bond and attachment between a mother and her child, and teach the child emotionality and cultural nuances pertinent to long term survival (Dissanayake, 2000). Thus music has assisted the likelihood of survival of the group as a whole, and the individuals within it.

A cohesive group of people has a greater chance of success. As the human race evolved, so did the social groupings, bringing larger groups of people together that needed to be socially cohesive to survive (Dunbar, 2017). Archaeological evidence suggests that music in ancient societies was a group activity (Cross & Morley, 2009). In particular, singing and therefore the act of making music

and moving together may have allowed these larger groups of people to bond quickly on a larger scale than one-on-one (Dunbar, 2017; Weinstein, Launay, Pearce, Dunbar & Steward, 2016). Music, therefore, may have functioned within these larger shared groups to bring about social meaning, group cohesion, cooperation and coordination (Bannan & Woodward, 2009; Cross & Morley, 2009; Mithen, 2007/2011). The lack of language to communicate within a social group may have led to considerable social tensions within the hominid group, thus Mithen (2011) speculated that music may have been one way the social group communicated emotionally, and also controlled emotional behaviour (Mithen, 2007/2011). Emotional expression is more central to music than to language, thus using music to express and regulate emotions requires interaction with old evolutionary parts of the human brain (Turner & Ioannides, 2009). Mithen (2007) further hypothesised that our early ancestors developed a means to communicate that lay between music and language prior to the two developing into separate symbol systems that allowed early humans to communicate through sounds (Chen-Hafteck & Mang, 2012). Music may have been used as a regulator of emotions and a way to synchronise the emotional status of a group of people. For example, group music making, such as singing, has been shown to lead to endorphin surges in the participants (Dunbar, 2017; Mithen, 2007/2011).

The group identity that music can foster for individuals supports collective thinking, synchronisation and group catharsis (Cross & Morley, 2009), thus promoting greater combined power than at the individualistic level. Current research into the role of group singing further supports this evolutionary role of group music making. Weinstein and colleagues (2016) conducted a study where they brought together a large group of choral singers, and measured levels of social closeness and pain measures after weekly singing sessions over a seven month period. The findings indicated that communal singing can cause a significant increase in social closeness of large groups of unfamiliar individuals and reduction in pain, suggesting an increase in the release of endorphins when experiencing large scale group singing (Weinstein et al., 2016). Pearce and colleagues reported similar findings. In their study they found a singing condition led to greater increases in closeness and positive effect for participants than non-singing group activities (Pearce, Launay, Dunbar, 2015). Therefore group singing and music making can foster social cohesion, and build a sense of community (Trehub et al., 2015) which many believe to be "the most adaptive and evolutionarily significant aspect of musical experience worldwide" (Trehub et al, 2015, p.4)

For the individual, survival is determined by how the person can relate to others within their social group – find a partner, breed, and function within the cultural boundaries of that group (Cross & Morley, 2009). This 'cultural fitness' is supported by musical behaviour in that it can motivate and reward appropriate behaviour within the group, thus reinforcing the coordination of the social group

(Cross & Morley, 2009; Mithen, 2007/2011). Once the individual has established a role within the society, their role to reproduce is further supported by music. This includes the role of music in ritual behaviours such as courting, mating (Mithen, 2007/2011) and then ensuring the survival of an infant. Mothers have used music to bond with, soothe and communicate with infants for millennia (Papousek, 1996).

Dissanayake (2000, 2009) proposed the theory that music as an art form may have developed from the musical interactions observed between mothers' and their infants, across cultures and time (Dissanayake, 2009). These musical interactions are believed to have emerged out of an evolutionary necessity for bonding, and are a critical and biologically programmed part of the infant-parent functionality (Dissanayake, 2000). As human ancestors evolved to bipedalism, birthing became more difficult as the result of two conflicting evolutionary trends – a narrower pelvis and a larger brain (Dissanayake, 2012). This resulted in offspring being born younger and more helpless. Communicating emotionally with the infant in musical ways was one way that ensured the mother and child bonded and supported the time and energy required in caring for her helpless offspring. This behavioural change, communicating musically, also meant the neural pathways in the brains of both mother and child released brain chemicals such as oxytocin that promoted and accompanied their feelings of love and affinity for each other (Dissanayake, 2012). These musical interactions represent the behavioural and emotional coordination of two individuals who need each other – the baby needs the mother to survive, and the mother achieves reproductive success by the baby's survival (Dissanayake, 2009).

Some theorists have suggested that musical interactions then further served in the role of survival by teaching the young infant about their language and culture, thus providing a way for the child to express themselves as they grew, within the structures of their social relations (Cross & Morley, 2009). Trainor (2015) postulates that music may have originated as both an evolutionary adaptation and as a product of culture. Music is one way parents teach their children about their culture and how children achieve cultural fit.

2.3 Music in early life

Human infants are precocious musical beings who exhibit excellent listening skills and memory for music from a very young age (Trehub, 2006). They are born music-capable, with specific areas in both hemispheres of the brain capable of interpreting structured sequences of sound, especially those in distinct rhythms linked with body rhythms (Turner & Ioannides, 2009). Thus, infants "are born sensitive to the company of the person who moves in the music" with them (Mazokopaki & Kugiumutzakis, 2009, p189). Before a child is born they are already familiar with, and move within

the musical world of their mother. Her heartbeat and voice has been their constant companion (Lecanuet, 1996). The human auditory system is unique and different from other animals in that it develops the capacity to receive, interpret, and respond to complex language; and to hear, discern, and respond to music (Graven & Brown, 2008). Sound is the most complex prenatal stimulus (Purncutt, 2006), and one of the earliest to develop. The foetal auditory system begins to process sounds between 16 – 20 weeks, and from 25 weeks gestation brain development is influenced by external sensory stimulation (Graven & Brown, 2008; Lecanuet, 1996; Purncutt, 2006).

During the third trimester the foetus is able to hear, process and remember musical patterns of sounds. Such exposure to music, voice and meaningful environmental sounds is required for the foetal auditory system to fully develop during the final trimester of pregnancy (Graven & Browne, 2008). The foetus learns these sounds and can associate them with their emotions (Papousek, 1996; Purncutt, 2006). Emotions such as pleasure, joy, fear, sadness and anxiety are recorded and stored as part of auditory memories in the limbic system (Graven & Browne, 2008). These emotions are thought to be influenced by how the mother responds emotionally to music as well (Lecanuet, 1996).

Infants show a clear preference at birth for their mother's melodious lullabies and their bodies become entrained to musical rhythms and sympathy of feelings expressed by the gestural movement and tone of her voice (Panksepp & Trevathen, 2009). After birth, the infant shows a clear preference for the prosody of the mother's speech, thus leading to a preference for her language; and finally a preference for her favourite music (Lecanuet, 1996; Fassbender, 1996; Papousek, 1996). The music of the mother's culture therefore is influential in the early auditory exposure of the infant.

Infants from the age of two and half months are capable of discerning temporal auditory patterns and this continues to improve during the first year of life (Pouthas, 1996; Trehub, 2006). Visual reinforcement audiometry tests, where infants turn their head in the presence of a specific sound, have shown that they can clearly discriminate frequency and timbre and process complex tones in a manner similar to adults by seven months of age (Fassbender, 1996; Trainor 1997).

Thus we can summarise that an infant is born already responsive to music (Henriksson-Macaulay & Welch, 2015) and the musical propensities of their caregivers. Mothers, it seems, intuitively know this and adapt the way they speak to their infants to 'fit' into this framework. They do so unconsciously and universally, adapting not only the way they speak, but also the way they look and interact with the infant (H.Papousek, 1996) to create the intrinsically musical dyadic

communication that is known as ‘motherese’, ‘parentese’ or Infant Directed Speech (IDS) (Papousek, 1996).

2.4 Parent-child musical interactions

‘Motherese’ or infant-directed speech (IDS) refers to the spontaneous ways that parents and caregivers talk with their infants (Saint-George et al., 2013) and it is an adjustment to, and reflection of the perceptual capacities of the newborn infant (Fassbender, 1996). Much of the research has focused on mothers and their interactions with infants; however, some research shows that similar patterns of IDS are observed in fathers (Fernald et al., 1989; Shute & Wheldall, 1999). Notably the quality of content of IDS does differ when hired carers are involved (Nwokah, 1987). It is the emotive quality of speech that is critical for infants (Singh, Morgan, & Best, 2002). IDS functions to communicate affect, facilitate social interaction through infant preference, engage and maintain infant attention and facilitate language acquisition (Saint-Georges et al., 2013).

When interacting with an infant the parent automatically raises the pitch of their voice, slows the tempo of their speech and makes long pauses. S/he speaks more rhythmically and in short well segmented phrases (Papousek, 1996). This rise of pitch helps the infant to track the auditory stimulation. IDS does not resemble sung melodies with discernible notes, rather it contains smooth, continuous gliding pitches (Papousek, 1996), and while it is repetitious, it is not monotonous due to the moment-to-moment variations that the parent uses to regulate infant arousal (Papousek, 1996; Schenfield, Trehub, & Nakata., 2003). Within patterns of neuro-typical development, the parent is finely attuned to the infant’s momentary behavioural-emotional and affective states, and uses these musical interactions to regulate emotions (Henriksson-Macaulay, 2015) and arousal levels of the infant (Papousek, 1996). For example, parents use rising melodies for eliciting arousal and attention and for giving the infant a turn in dialogue and falling melodies for soothing a hyper aroused infant and ending a turn taking sequence (Papousek,1996). This is also dependent on the child, as research shows the presence and engagement of the child is influenced by the infant’s actual preferences and vocalisations (Saint-Georges et al., 2013). Arias and Pena (2016) conducted a study to explore the behavioural and brain responses of infants to both infant directed speaking and singing during face-to-face interactions. Their results suggested that infant directed talking provided the infant with specific cues that allowed them to respond to mother stimulation thus displaying a rudimentary version of turn-taking behaviour (Arias & Pena, 2016).

Infant-directed singing describes the changes in the way the mother or father sings to their infant and shares many of the musical qualities of infant directed speech. Research shows that both mothers and fathers make perceptible adjustments when singing to their infants, and that these

changes can be perceived by listeners (Trehub et al., 1997; Trehub 2015; Trehub & Gudmundsdottir, 2015). In particular, the pitch of infant directed singing is significantly higher and the tempo significantly slower when parents are singing to their infants as opposed to simulated singing (Trehub et al., 1997). In an experiment where mothers and fathers were asked to sing to their infants, and then sing away from their infants but sing as they 'typically' would sing if the infant was present, all listeners, whether musically trained or not, could tell the difference at a significant level between the infant directed singing and the simulated singing. The higher the pitch, and the greater the decrease in tempo, the greater the accuracy in identifying infant directed singing (Trehub et al., 1997). The musical qualities in infant-directed singing, as in infant directed speech, include singing in a higher pitch, slower tempo, and warmer tonality demonstrating exaggerated musical cues, and heightened emotionality (de l'Etoile, 2006; Trainor, 1996; Trainor, 1997; Trehub et al., 1997).

Some researchers suggest, as in IDS, it is the positive emotional qualities in the infant-directed singing that attracts the infant's attention (Shenfield, Trehub, & Nakata, 2003). In research conducted by Shenfield and colleagues (2003), infants engaged longer for maternal singing than maternal speaking, and maternal singing promoted optimal arousal levels for sustained infant attention and interest. Parental singing may therefore serve communicative and regulatory functions comparable to those of infant directed speech (Trehub et al., 1997). This regulatory function is seen in the everyday parenting practices of singing to soothe or stimulate babies, depending on what the parent perceives the baby needs at that time. Similar styles of singing have divergent consequences, depending on the infant's state (Shenfield et al., 2003). In a study conducted by Trehub (2001) six-month old babies exhibited endocrine changes after listening to their mother's singing. Babies would become calmer when they were upset and more alert when sleepy (Trehub, 2001).

The infant is well-positioned to participate in these dyadic musical interactions as they have a developed auditory perception that is highly attuned to detecting emotional information in the prosodic information of their mother, and also from information in lullabies and nursery songs (Schubert & McPherson, 2006). This biological predisposition to extracting emotional meaning from vocal signals allows the adult to communicate with the infant through intention and affect, thus not relying on the infant to understand or comprehend the words (Mazokopaki & Kugiumutzakis, 2009; Schubert & McPherson, 2006). Rather, the melodic contour of the infant directed interaction helps to guide the infant in regulating states of arousal, attention and affect. Thus the mutual coordination of all of these parametres affords for mutual regulation. Temporal and acoustic features of infant and parent vocal interactions foster a sympathetic coordination, enabling subjective feelings (Powers & Trevarthen, 2009). Theories of musicality of parent-infant

communication identify dynamic parameters of vocalisations that favour intersubjective awareness and its emotional regulation from early in life (Powers & Trevarthen, 2009). Mothers' intonation and voice in speech and singing is fundamental to the intersubjective quality of the relationship of the mother and infant, encouraging mutual attunement and enabling mutual affective regulation and communicative involvement (Marwick & Murray, 2009), as well as culturally conditioned learning (Malloch & Trevarthen, 2009)

These communicative capacities in the infant, coupled with the seemingly intuitive behaviours of the parent leads to an intimate dialogue, where the rhythmic and melodic qualities communicate the intention and affect of the message (Schubert & McPherson, 2006). The parent, through sensitive timing, holds the infant's attention, regulates their emotions and creates a micro culture of predictable routines and styles (Gratier & Apter-Danon, 2009). This is referred to as communicative musicality (Malloch & Trevarthen, 2009).

2.5 Communicative musicality

The term 'communicative musicality' (Malloch, 1999) was coined by Stephen Malloch, a musician and psychologist, who noticed while listening to tapes of mother-infant interactions, that the mother's speech was lilting and possessed musical qualities, including a distinct rhythmicity and melodious give and take, and that the interaction between the two was co-creative (Malloch & Trevarthen, 2009). He felt that these interactions showed that when mothers and infants communicated effectively, they were "attuned" to the vocal and physical gestures of the other (Malloch, 1999, p.31), actions that were co-operative and co-dependent between the dyad. These actions consist of the elements pulse, quality and narrative, elements that Malloch felt were the basis of "human communication" (Malloch, 1999, p.29). Malloch's seminal research presents the theory that these elements of communicative musicality are the tools by which emotion is conveyed and thus companionship formed (Malloch, 1999).

2.6 Attuning to the child's needs

Communicative musicality allows a mother and her infant to express themselves in ways that are sympathetic with the other (Malloch, 1999), and this can lead to stronger emotional bonds and attachment. These can be observed in a loving parent-infant relationship in easily identified music elements (Edwards, 2011). When the parent and infant are attuned to each other, as described above (Malloch, 1999) the infant and parent move towards and with each other through an exchange of pulse, pitch, timbre, volume and gesture that are both reciprocal and responsive in nature. These musical interactions can both communicate and regulate emotions. Positive forms of emotional

communication require the parent to align themselves with the infant's current emotional state, or attune to their needs (Creighton, 2011). Winnicott (1952) believed that this ability to tune in with the baby was the key factor that provided the 'good enough' conditions in which a baby develops and thrives. Attunement, therefore, contributes to a strong and secure relationship forming between the infant and their primary caregiver (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978).

The importance of a secure relationship has been well researched (Ainsworth, 1982; Bowlby, 1988) and is understood to impact not only on early life but also lifelong development. Everyday parenting moments that involve attuned musical interactions and play can support this very important early emotional development, as well as the ongoing growth and development of the child through the early years. When there is an interruption or risk to this attachment developing, music can serve as a tool to support the parent and the child to connect and attune to each other.

2.6.1 Music therapy to support parent-child attunement and attachment

Music therapy is a research-based practice and profession in which music is used to actively support people as they strive to improve their health, functioning and wellbeing (AMTA, 2013). The approaches developed in parent-infant music therapy groups and individual work have been informed primarily from an understanding of the importance of an infant achieving secure attachment with a primary caregiver as the basis of ongoing mental health (Edwards & Abad, 2016). In this context, Edwards (2011) has described music therapy for parents and infants as a

> process of developing a relationship with a caregiver/dyad in order to support, develop, and extend their skills in using musical and music-like interactions including vocal improvisation, chants, lullabies, songs, and rhymes, to promote and enhance the sensitivity and mutual co-regulation between infant and caregiver, in order to create the optimal environment for secure attachment to be fostered. (Edwards, 2011, p.7)

Music therapists have worked with families where interactions and consequently attachment are vulnerable or disrupted as the result of a variety of clinical and social circumstances. These circumstances include families in medical settings (Bower & Shoemark, 2009; O'Callaghan, & Jordan, 2011; Shoemark & Dearn, 2008); families with children who have disabilities (Allgood, 2005; Williams, Berthelsen, Nicholson, Walker & Abad, 2012; Oldfield, 2011); families who are socially disadvantaged (Abad & Williams, 2007; Nicholson, Berthelsen, Abad, Williams & Bradley, 2008); who identify as Indigenous (Williams & Abad, 2005), who are headed by a young parent (Abad, 2011; Abad & Williams, 2006); refugee families (Edwards, Scahill, & Phelan, 2007);

mothers experiencing depression (Levinge, 2011), and families that have recently adopted a child (Drake, 2011).

Parent-infant work in music therapy has developed as a professional specialism with recognised leaders (Abad & Edwards, 2004; Abad & Williams 2007; Edwards, 2011; Loewy, 2011; Oldfield, 2011; Shoemark & Dearn 2008), and music therapy programs have been specifically developed to support these families, most notably, the Australian program *Sing & Grow* (Abad & Edwards 2004; Abad & Williams 2006; 2007; Williams, Teggelove & Day, 2014).

2.6.2 Music therapy to support families with a child with a disability

Music therapy has a long history in the field of special education (McFerran & Rickson, 2007; Thompson & McFerran, 2015) and more recently has begun to focus on supporting the child's development within a holistic model of family-centred music therapy (FCMT) that supports both the skill development of the child and the quality of the parent-child relationship (Oldfield, Bell, & Pool, 2012; Thompson, 2012; Thompson, McFerran, & Gold, 2013). Thompson (2012) reported how in her clinical experience many parents describe the pressure they feel to always teach their child rather than play. Music therapy within the FCMT model is therefore presented in fun, playful and respectful ways within this triad relationship. Williams et al (2012) reported concerns that families of children with disabilities may face unique challenges in establishing positive parent-child relationships. Both research studies reported that significant improvements for parent mental health and parent-child interactions were measured post music therapy treatment (Williams et al., 2012; Thompson et al., 2012). Qualitative analyses of parent interviews documented positive changes to the ways parents perceived and responded to their child. The researchers concluded that the benefits of parent involvement "may be more about strengthening the parent-child relationship" and that FCMT intervention gave parents "the opportunity to experience first-hand their child's ability" (Thompson et al., 2013, p.850).

2.7 Musical parenting

A strong parent-child relationship is imbued with musical interactions and filled with musical moments. This has been referred to as musical parenting, a term coined by researcher Lori Custodero that describes the "use of music to provide for the expressed and implicit needs of children" (Custodero & Johnson-Green, 2008, p.16). Custodero explains that the use of music is not taught, rather it is intimate and instinctive (Custodero, 2002). She conducted a large-scale study of American parents to investigate how they used music in their parenting, and what influenced this use of music in everyday life (Custodero, Britto & Xin, 2002; Custodero & Johnson-Green, 2003).

The Parents' Use of Music with Infants Survey (PUMIS) was conducted through in-depth telephone interviews with a regionally focused national sample of English-speaking parents with children 4 to 6 months of age (see Custodero et al., 2002; Custodero & Johnson-Green, 2003 for details). In this survey American parents were asked about their musical parenting practices, and this was compared and analysed in accordance to parent demographics, parent and child physical and mental health status, parent and child interactions, and parent attitudes and beliefs about music and infants. After a pilot test the survey was administered by a professional survey firm, with data collected and collated from 2250 families. Results showed that parents often engaged musically with their infants and for a range of reasons. The most common musical activity they participated in was singing to their infant daily (69%); followed by playing music daily (66%). The most common songs sung were lullabies. Most participants in the survey felt that parents were "naturally inclined to sing to their babies" and nearly all parents agreed that playing music to babies was developmentally significant (93%) (Custodero et al., 2002).

These results were supported by findings from a semi-structured survey study conducted by Ilari (2005) with Canadian mothers. They too reported singing to be the most common musical interaction shared with their infants through lullabies and play songs. Ilari concluded that there were many factors that affected the ways in which mothers and infants interacted musically in their everyday lives, and that these were complex and associated with a number of behavioural, emotional, social, cultural and economic factors (Ilari, 2005).

2.7.1 Parent musical identity and musical parenting

The quantity and frequency of musical parenting reported in the PUMIS did not align with parent self-reported musical identity. One-third of the participants in the PUMIS identified themselves as musical, despite high levels of daily use of music to accompany care activities, regulate, sooth, engage and interact with infants (Custodero et al., 2002). This led the researchers to question if parents had an awareness of their own musicianship evident as a result of the musicality involved in simply caring for a baby. Given the many musical elements of parenting infants, and the frequency of singing reported in this study, they suggest that the earliest months of a child's life may be an "especially musical time in the lives of their parents" (Custodero et al., 2002, p.44). Papousek theorised that parents who don't identify as musical may not be aware of their "intuitive parenting" which involves high levels of musical engagement for mutual enjoyment (M.Papousek, 1996).

Our sense of self is constantly evolving, and our musical roles and identities play into this. Parenthood may represent a time of great change in how we identify as a person and how we identify musically. Music is inextricably and fundamentally linked to our sense of self (MacDonald,

Hargreaves & Miell, 2017), and parenting an infant can present a musically enriched time in the parent's and infant's life (Custodero et al., 2002).

Musical identity has been defined in two broad categories – Identities in Music (IIM), which is concerned with defining musical roles; and Music in Identities (MII), (MacDonald, Hargreaves & Miell, 2002), which describes how we use music as a resource for self-making, and the ways in which music is drawn on by individuals, groups and institutions as a marker of forms of identity (Barrett, 2016b). These identities are performative and social, they are something we do rather than something we have. A key point is that these identities may not be tied to technical skill or proficiency on an instrument, but rather to social influences including family dynamics (MacDonald, Hargreaves & Miell, 2017; Spychiger, 2017). This musical identity is fluid and shifts depending on how people engage with their world and in what contexts (MacDonald, Hargreaves & Miell, 2017). It could be argued that parents interact with their world in new and different musical ways. Musical identities take shape relationally (De Nora, 2016), and new parents are forming new musical relationships with their infants. Our musical selves also derive in part from our attempts to figure out who we are and what our place in the world is, in relation to the lives of others and our interactions with them (Hallam, 2017; Lecanuet,, 2017; O'Neill, 2017). For parents, this shift in roles may be particularly pertinent.

Musical identity is not just about being a musician; it is determined by whether music helps define "who we are" (Richard & Chin, 2017, p.288). Parents who do not identify as musical or as musicians, but do identify as people who use music in their homes to play, interact, nurture and engage with their children, may identify and define their parenting role as musical, as it involves music making and music sharing. Non-musicians are rarely non-musical (Richard & Chin, 2017). Hallam (2017) argues that it is possible for music to be a central element of an individual's learning identity even if they are not a 'musician' in the traditional sense (Hallam, 2017). These musical identities never come ready made, they evolve over time and are anchored to our sense of self, they are created through a process that is never concluded (Rudd, 2017).

2.7.2 Musicality, music and musicianship and their impact on musical parenting

Music is at the very essence of our humanity and is one of the things that distinguishes humans from other species (Hallam, 2011). It is something we share across cultures, but there is no common definition of what music is, or what it means to be musical. While musicality has been defined as a "natural, spontaneously developing trait based on and constrained to biology and cognition", music has been defined as a "social and cultural construct based on that very musicality" (Honing, Cate, Peretz & Trehub, 2015, p.1). John Blacking defined music as "humanly organized sound"

(Blacking, 1973, p.10). What is acknowledged as 'music' is not only biologically constructed; it is also culturally defined, and varies within groups even within the same culture (Hallam, 2006).

For parents, the musical ways in which many interact and engage with their infants may represent its own construct of musicality within the context of a parenting group. Musicianship, musical, and musician are all constructs of music and can take on many and varied forms in different contexts (McPherson et al., 2012). The musical ways in which many parents interact and engage with their infants may represent feelings of musicality in parents, more so than an ability or talent in being musical. Music ability has been defined as the "ability to play a musical instrument or to sing", thus the ability is identified on the basis of developing a practical skill (Hallam, 2011, p.216). In parenting, the construct of music, musicality and musicianship may take on different values to ability to technically perform music or be a '*musical person'*. Rather, the identity is in being a musical parent, in being someone who values musical exchanges with their children to serve a range of parenting and developmental purposes. McPherson and colleagues (2012) found in their longitudinal study on music in the lives of young Australians, that there was no evidence for a relationship between the overall value attached to music and a person's technical competency to play or make music (McPherson et al., 2012).

In the PUMIS, parents who had music education experience, or who had memories of being parented musically were associated with higher frequencies of playing and singing music to their own children. In particular, the strongest statistical association reported was that for singing as a parent and being sung to by a parent (Custodero & Johnson-Green, 2003). The researchers concluded that parents' experience matters and directly impacts the child's early music experiences through the context of their family, culture and society.

2.8 Music in the home

Musical engagement with infants and children tends to be an activity virtually hidden within the intimate confines of contemporary family life (Custodero & Johnson-Green, 2008). Survey based research which captures a moment in time, has reported that music is used in the home to help establish routines and provide structure to the day, including specific play times and rest times for young infants (Addessi, 2009; Blackburn, 2017; Custodero et al., 2002; Trehub et al., 1997), and to engage the infant with the environment to reinforce routines, learning and cultural beliefs as the infant grows (Custodero & Johnson-Green, 2008). The family unit, which sits inside a social context, within a larger cultural framework all impact on the early learning experiences children have. These environmental systems each affect how the infant learns and grows (Bronfenbrenner,

1979). Children similarly experience music within social and cultural spaces, beginning with the nuclear culture of the family (Campbell, 2010).

2.8.1 Frequency of music in the home

Being musical is part of our human design (Welch, 2005). Using music in the home can be viewed as an extension of this. Frequency of music use in the home can be captured and measured in time through survey and across time through longitudinal studies. Survey based research, such as the PUMIS has indicated that parents use music as frequently as daily (Custodero et al., 2003). Williams and colleagues (2015) reported on the frequency of musical interactions of just over 3000 families' with a child aged 2-3 years at the time of data collection, via the *Growing Up In Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC)* study. They reported that nearly all families used music weekly (96%), with the largest cohort using music activities with their children 6-7 days per week (42%, *n* = 1265). Only 4% (*n* = 109) reported not using it at all in the last week. Of the others, 23% (*n* = 672) used it one or two days a week and 32% (*n* = 975) used it 3-5 days. The kinds of musical interactions shared were not identified.

De Vries (2009) conducted a survey with Australian parents aimed at gauging the frequency of music use in the family home. Parents were asked how often they played music, sang, played instruments, and encouraged musical play with their child, as well as how often they encouraged their children to create or make up their own music. Results showed that 65% (n=41) of parents played music to their children more than once a week but not daily, and 18% played music daily. Seven participants (11%) played music once a week or less and 6% never played music to their children. For the remainder of the questions the most common response indicated that the majority of parents sang, encouraged musical play, played an instrument or encouraged children to create music once a week or less (de Vries, 2009).

Few studies have provided longitudinal detailed case studies of the ways that music is used in the home. These studies provide a lens to view music making and its frequency over longer periods of time. Byrne and Hourigan (2010) conducted a comparative case study (*n* = 5) of music interactions between mothers and infants under the age of 13 months over an 8-week period using observations, interviews and e-journals. They suggested that mothers placed importance on the role of music in learning and development and used both live and recorded music in the home to support this, as they encountered routines of daily life that provided many opportunities for teachable moments (Byrne & Horrigan, 2010). Mothers also used music to communicate with and to bond with their infants; and they used music as a way to pass on and create family traditions (Byrne & Hourigan, 2010).

Barrett (2009a, 2011, 2012c, 2016a, 2017 in press) conducted several longitudinal studies of music in the home over the course of two to three years. These studies focused on how children engaged with music in their home and community and music's role in children's identity work (Barrett, 2011, 2012c). The role of singing, invented song making, music participation in a MELP and in the home were analysed longitudinally. Findings identified how parents use music in their everyday parenting role to support their children's development, identity work and behaviour regulation, to establish family routines and rituals, and maintain their own mental health wellbeing (Barrett, 2009). Further findings focused on the nature of children's invented singing (Barrett, 2017 in press) and the uses of singing and song making in young children's lives (Barrett, 2016a).

2.8.2 Singing in the home

In many of the studies on music use in the home, singing is the most commonly reported parent led activity (Blackburn, 2017; De Vries, 2009; Custodero, 2003; Custodero & Johnson- Green, 2003, 2008; Ilari, 2005; Trehub et al., 1997). Singing to children is a practice that crosses cultures and time (Papousek, 1996). Every culture has a dedicated infant music genre, which includes lullabies in all and play songs in some (Chen-Hafteck & Mang, 2012; Trehub, 2006). These songs exist to transmit sociocultural values and customs to the new generation (Chen-Hafteck & Mang, 2012). Children are imbedded in sociocultural environments, and these directly influence their musical experiences (Young, 2016). While they have a biological predisposition to musical activity and to their birth culture (Custodero & Johnson-Green, 2003), their musical worlds are shaped by larger cultural, political, and economic forces and institutions, which are often themselves based on varying ideologies (Young & Ilari, 2012).

A shared musical understanding begins early in life, even before birth (Custodero & Johnson-Green, 2003), and is shaped by the significant others present in the child's early life. Infants begin to adapt to parental culture before they can speak (Powers & Trevarthen, 2009), and show signs of culture-specific processing of pitch patterns by 12 month of age (Trehub, 2006). Parental singing, within the cultural constructs of that parent, place a child within a socio-cultural musical context.

Trehub and colleagues reported how music, and in particular singing, permeated the daily lives of the 67 infants in their study that investigated the ecology of singing to infants. Families responded to survey questions and kept a musical diary for one day, documenting their everyday use of music in their normal routines. Singing accompanied many activities including play, sleep preparation, feeding, car travel, nappy changing and bath time. The most common songs sung were play songs, followed by lullabies, pop songs and invented songs (Trehub et al., 1997). Mothers were the

predominant singers in the household, with 72% of them singing often or always, while fathers sang with the same frequency only 14% of the time (Trehub et al., 1997).

Similar findings were reported by Custodero and colleagues in the PUMIS that reported mothers sang more to their infants than fathers (Custodero et al., 2003). More than half (60%) of the American parents interviewed sang to their infants daily (*n*=1210) and a further 32% sang weekly. This frequency of engagement was higher than parents reading books with their children (37%), but lower than playing (83%) and hugs/cuddles (89%). While higher income was associated with shared book reading, playing and hug/cuddling it was not associated with time spent singing and playing music together (Custodero et al., 2003).

In a follow-on study, Custodero (2006) investigated the singing practices of 10 American families, chosen from the PIMUS to see what types of songs they sang and what function songs served within the family. Using a 'child in context' model (Graue & Walsh, 1998), singing practices were gauged by parent observations of the children's musical interactions that they noted in journals, researcher observations during a home visit, and semi-structured interviews with the participating parents. These interviews focused on the parent's memories of family music making, gathering descriptions of current musical practices, attitudes about music traditions and any music making outside of the home. The researcher then deconstructed the phenomenon of singing and captured it in stories told by the parents. These were coded, reconstructed according to their meanings and function, based on emergent themes, and finally contextualised into singing practices in the families.

Singing served the child in a variety of interpersonal and intrapersonal ways, and their musical play was characterised by both learned and spontaneous singing practices (Custodero, 2006). Families used singing to 'make special' routine activities and to create and maintain traditions. Three key themes emerged showing that families use songs to help establish routines, form and maintain traditions, and for play. Families used songs in an improvisatory and spontaneous way to accompany daily routines, such as mealtimes, naps, bath and bedtime; and also as routines, where families would set aside specific time in a day for musical play. Family histories were maintained through singing specific songs that were important in the parent's childhood thus acknowledging the past and including this in their own musical parenting but building towards creating their own family singing traditions. This was often the case when the family lived a distance from the grandparents. Some families also used songs to consciously create their own new family singing traditions. Lastly, families used songs for play, focusing on the immediate experience, and singing

in generalised play. Songs used for establishing routines and establishing or maintaining traditions were primarily learned songs, while play songs tended to be improvised (Custodero, 2006).

Barrett (2006, 2016b) sought to understand the role of invented singing and song-making in young children's world-making and identity work. One study, of 18 parent-child dyads identified that invented songs, as distinct from known songs begin to develop from 18 months of age, and represented a shift developmentally in the child's ability to make meaning of their environment through playful singing (Barrett, 2006). In another study Barrett (2017 in press) presented data to illustrate how both invented known song singing were used by families to strengthen social and emotional ties, to learn about aspects of their lived worlds, and as a way to accumulate cultural knowledge. In a case vignette, a child uses playful inventive singing to accompany his free play time. He sings to accompany his craft activity of making a star with paper, glue and glitter. As he shakes the glitter onto the paper, he sings a 'sprinkle song' that supports his meaning making of this playful activity.

Play in general, has many musical features and comparable individual social efficacy (Cross & Morley, 2009). Music provides a means for playing with others in both ritualistic and creative ways that pass on cultural learning, especially if the play is shared between parent and child.

2.8.3 Shared musical moments in the home and the cultural context

Children are born into the musical worlds of their homes (Campbell, 2011). Musical moments that are shared in the home through day-to-day interactions and through play provide the foundations for the formation of their musical identity (Campbell, 2011). Play provides many children a means for engaging with the world around them (Marsh, 2011). According to Marsh (2011), cultural influences on young children's musical play and meaning-making include parents, siblings, and other relatives; as well as mediated sources such as TVs, radios, CDs, films, videos and the internet.

For infants, opportunities for musical play are usually provided by parents, who support their infant's use of melodic contours by imitating the vocalisations of their infant, which leads to increased engagement with the infant and reciprocal vocal play and matching (Papousek, 1996). The salience of musical elements in games is evident in three functional parts that characterise interactional sequences: the first is the fast beat, accompanied by a rising melody and increase in dynamics. This elicits attention and helps build tension, is followed by a pause; and finally culminates in a peak in the melody and dynamics; followed by a falling melody in diminuendo and rallentando mode and finally mutual relaxation (Papousek, 1996). This can be seen in peek-a-boo

and tickle games, for example. Such musical games provide simple and predictable interactional sequences or phrases and include multimodal forms of stimulation (Marsh & Young, 2006).

For older children, musical play is shared with others within cultural frameworks, and often in ritualistic ways. Human culture is ritualistic, and acquiring the ritual requires the learning of that particular, culture-specific form or set of 'rules' (Merker, 2009). Humans are vocal learners, and the formal properties and complexities of rituals including songs acquired through vocal learning provide the means for making rituals (Merker, 2009). An example of this can be seen in children's clapping games, where children will watch, imitate, practice and learn complex patterns to participate in the musical game. Older children also partake in musical creative play, such as singing (Barrett & Tafuri, 2012; Tafuri, 2008) and song invention (Barrett, 2006, 2009, 2016a). Both of these are shaped by the cultural and contextual environment of the child's world, and are a "rich avenue for exploring the nature and extent of children's musical thinking" (Barrett & Tafuri, 2012, p.301).

Patricia Campbell studied the lived musical experiences of children through observing their informal musicking in school playgrounds, school bus rides, classrooms, and a toy shop and interviewing twenty children about their musical tastes and preferences (Campbell, 2010). Her stories demonstrated how the music children create within themselves is a starting point for understanding their values, their knowledge and their needs and this is heavily influenced by the music of their families. In particular, Campbell notes the pervasive influence of family on the musical thoughts and choices of children. Parents figured prominently in the musical lives of the children, and older siblings played a role too. In one case a grandparent also played an influential role on music taste and experiences (Campbell, 2010).

Musical play in infancy and childhood is overwhelmingly vocal and social (Marsh & Young, 2006) and inducts infants into their culture through their creative participation in games (Malloch & Trevarthen, 2009). Shared musical interactions, including singing, in the home provide benefit to both the parent and child (Baker & MacKinley, 2006). In addition to supporting secure attachment in infancy, maternal mental health has been positively linked to musical interactions in families. Custodero and colleagues (2003) reported that parents who sang and played music more were less likely to report depressive symptoms, were less frustrated and more responsive (Custodero et al., 2003). Mothers with no depressive symptoms and latter born children were 1.5 times more likely to engage in music activities compared to those with one or more depressive symptom (Custodero et al., 2003), and were more likely to participate in daily versus weekly music playing. The researchers suggest that perhaps music is used by mentally healthy parents as a way of coping with

pressures of everyday life (Custodero et al., 2003). Creighton and colleagues (2013) investigated the intrinsic experience of singing for mothers and the impact this had on attachment constructs. They reported that singing "facilitated a flow of interconnections between positive mental and emotional states" (Creighton, Atherton & Kitamura, 2013, p.17). Mothers described feeling "a spiral of happiness" and being "calmed" by singing (Creighton et al., 2013, p.32).

Shared music making in the home has also been positively correlated with long term developmental outcomes (Williams et al, 2015). In an Australian study, the frequency of shared home music making was reported by 3,031 parents in a first wave of data collection when their children were two to three years of age. A range of social, emotional and cognitive outcomes were measured at a second wave of data collection when the children were four to five years old. These included parent and teacher reports and direct testing. Socio-demographic variables were controlled for and a series of regression analyses conducted. The frequency of shared home music activities was found to have a small significant partial association with measures of children's vocabulary, numeracy, attentional and emotional regulation, and prosocial skills (Williams et al., 2015).

2.9 Changes in the ways children experience music in modern society

Children experience music in a multitude of ways, traditionally at the direction and under the influence of the parent. The influence that parents have, however, is changing, as parents now contend with external factors that influence the cultural musical experiences of their children more so than in previous generations and in ways they may have less control over. Bronfenbrenner theorised that children's development occurs within an ecological environment that is made up of a "set of nested structures, each inside the other like a set of Russian dolls" (Brofenbrenner, 1979, p.3). Within the most immediate of these nested structures (or the microsystem) is the family home, the family unit, and the culture of the neighbourhood. All of these influence the child's musical experiences and development, including interactions with parents, siblings, neighbours, teachers and friends. The relationship between the child's contexts of home, school, early learning or care, and neighbourhood are referred to as the mesosystem. The exosystem is the next nested structure, and considers the influence of government policy and media. All of this sits within the final nested structure, the macrosystem which is influenced by culture (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). At each level, the child's development is influenced by obvious forces, such as parent belief and financial restraint, to seemingly far away and less obvious forces, such as government policy on music education, and cultural value of music listening, learning and education.

The 21st Century has witnessed a digital revolution that has impacted the way people, including parents, receive new information, understand and interpret previously known information, and

engage with music. This permeates the family systems from the microsystem through to the macrosystem. At the micro-level, parents can now 'research' a broad range of topics on child development and parenting strategies, all while sitting on the couch, from fussy eating to supporting the development of young minds and bodies, and they are finding studies that say 'music is good for your baby'. They can also access music through digital media. Advances in information technology have been accompanied by technological advances on the medical front. These have allowed us to see how music affects the brain, and how music engagement can change brain structure and function (Hallam, 2006). At the meso-level, access to information through digital media may impact the way the parents interacts with education systems, as they seek to bring music into their children's environment.

This increased access to information and consequently increased awareness of the positive impacts of music on children's early development has occurred at a time when the personal musical abilities of parents may have decreased, as a result of funding cuts to arts education. In Australia, for example, this exosystem change has seen major cutbacks for music education for primary, secondary and tertiary over the past several decades (National Review of School Music Education, 2006). The ramification of these changes may be manifesting in the current generation of parents and teachers, who may lack ability and confidence to make music with children. At a macro-level, there is potential for a cultural shift in the way that parents view their own musicality, and how they value their role in musical parenting, and that of an 'expert'. Parents who do not feel adequately musical or musically capable may seek support to provide early music experiences through technology, the early childhood education sector, or from the music 'expert'.

2.9.1 Neuroscience support for learning and development through music

There is an abundance of neuro-scientific research that shows music engagement and education supports brain development (McPherson et al., 2012). These are often reported as news stories or posted on social media sites with catchy headlines. Hallam (2016) provides a summary of the many ways that actively making music impacts on the intellectual, social and personal development of children. This includes improvements in:

- Aural perception, which supports language and literacy skills
- Verbal memory skills
- Spatial reasoning which contributes to some elements of mathematics
- Self-regulation
- Creativity

- Academic attainment (Hallam, 2016, p.8).

It is worth noting that while the brain responds quickly to engagement with musical activities, "permanent and substantial reorganisation of brain functioning takes considerable time" (Hallam, 2016, p.2). Musical training, which occurs over the course of years, leads to many of these changes in brain function and structure (Hallam, 2006). Research demonstrates that children who study music over a period of time will later show an enlarged corpus collosum, and will have a larger cerebellum and increased grey matter (Hodges, 2006) and better developed auditory cortex (Trainor et al, 2003). Consequently, much of the neuro-scientific evidence for the positive developmental benefits of early music engagement tends to focus on children aged older than four years. There is a small body of evidence from well-designed experimental studies that shows significant improvements in vocabulary (Moreneo et al, 2011), executive function (Moreno et al., 2011), IQ (Shellenberg, 2004), math outcomes (Goeghegan & Mitchelmore, 1996), social skills (Kirschner & Tomasello, 2010; Lobo & Winsler, 2006) and self-regulation (Winsler, Ducenne & Koury, 2011) for children over the age of four years, who were randomly assigned to music verses a comparison group.

Research specific to the benefits of music participation for very young children is more limited, and may reflect the difficulties of researching infants. One study (Gerry et al., 2012) found that infants involved in an active musical experience showed superior pre-linguistic communication skills and social behaviour, as well as accelerated acquisition of culture-specific knowledge of tonality compared with infants assigned to a passive music experience (Gerry et al., 2012). In this study 34 families were randomly assigned to a one-hour active music class, passive music class or control class. Post testing showed that infants in the active music group acquired culture-specific knowledge of western tonality at an accelerated pace, and they demonstrated superior development of pre-linguistic communicative gestures and social behaviours. The researchers suggest that "the infant brain might be particularly plastic with respect to musical experience" (Gerry et al., 2012, p.404).

Gruhn (2002) reported that toddlers who participated in a special weekly music program with their parents rated higher in the quality of their physical movements to music and in their imitation of rhythmic patterns than children from an equivalent control group in a childcare setting (Gruhn, 2002). Music therapy programs aimed at supporting family wellbeing have also documented that parent-child relationships improve when the dyad attend a regular music class together (Nicholson et al., 2008; Walworth, 2009), and that self-reported parent mental health improves from participation (Abad, 2011; Williams et al., 2012).

2.9.2 Music technology to support music in the home

The development of electronic media in the late 20th Century has "revolutionized access to and use of music in our everyday lives" (Hallam, 2016, p.1). The digitisation of music has greatly modified the ways in which babies and young children experience music (Sulkin & Brodsky, 2013; Young & Gillen, 2007). Young (2008) believes that these changes are "radically reconfiguring musical childhoods" (Young, 2008, p.34) and Campbell (2010) believes this distinguishes 21st Century children from previous generations, describing them as "digital natives", children born after the emergence of online social digital technologies (Campbell, 2010, p.219).

Increasingly, young children's access to music experience and means of music engagement is mediated through technology, from the multiple presentations of children's TV shows, DVDs of child entertainers; iPads and iPhones with music apps and games, personalised playlists downloaded onto phones including child-specific streams of music, to the almost ubiquitous inclusion of music and sound in children's early books and toys. A recently documented phenomena is "hybridising musical exposure" (Blackburn, 2017, p.20). That is, children experience music through more than one sensory experience at a time. While greater access to music may have seemingly democratised access to and engagement with music (Barrett, 2017, in press) it also creates concerns that warrant further attention. One of these is a growing gap between the amounts of time people spend listening to music as opposed to making music (McPherson et al., 2012). Another is that children are experiencing music through watching it via screen media, and that this is often produced specifically to target young children (Brooks, 2015a).

There has been a dramatic expansion of the children's digital entertainment market in recent decades (Brooks, 2015b). Childhood has been identified by some as a "saleable cultural concept" (Schor, 2003, p.7), and this change in marketing, coupled with very high usage has "turned kids into a massive global market" (Edgar & Edgar, 2008, p.64). For very young children, the dual marketing is also aimed at their parents, and may influence parent-child interactions (Wicks, 2001).

Research on music participation suggests that active participation from parents is crucial to fully realise the musical, communicative and social benefits of early music experiences for children (Gerry et al., 2012). Listening to music via an iPhone, watching a music DVD or TV series, or engaging with a musical toy does not provide the relationship-building opportunities that music making does (Henriksson-Macaulay & Welch, 2015). Nor does it support early language development as effectively as human engagement and musical interactions that result from face to face music sharing. Little is known about the long term developmental outcomes of children's use of multi-media without the active engagement of an adult. The American Academy of Paediatrics

recently published the first research to date that shows an association between language delay and increased handheld screen time (American Academy of Paediatrics, 2017). Another study of the Baby Einstein videos found infants did not learn the highlighted words on the videos without parent involvement (Richert, Robb, Fender & Wartella, 2010). Redefining babies as learners can impact on the adult-baby relationship, casting the adult into the role of teacher and thus transform learning into the consumption of goods and services in the market (Brooks, 2015a). This view is shared by Young (2012) who feels the corporate world has redefined musical childhoods according to marketing criteria.

Music experienced through screen time, digital devices and manufactured or computerised toys may be more common in today's modern homes, where education and entertainment are becoming entwined. Young (2008) reflected that the contemporary home is being constructed as a place for entertainment and education to co-exist as 'edutainment', in which "educative purposes are blended into activities intended to entertain" (Young, 2008, p.34). In a study aimed at gathering information on the everyday musical experiences of babies and very young children in the home, Young (2008) reported that families had a vast array of music resources including toys with digitised tunes, mobiles that clip to cots, instruments, CDs and DVDs, as well as exposure to music via TV and radios that played in the house each day (Young, 2008). Only 20% of the children in the study were sung to by their parents (Young, 2008). De Vries (2009) also reported what he perceived to be low daily musical engagement rates between parents and children. He conducted a follow up focus study to identify the reasons for this lower than expected engagement. None of the parents were surprised at the low response rate to daily engagement. Instead, they listed several reasons for this, including the availability of multi-media such as DVDs and CDs which children can engage with "without an adult present" (De Vries, 2009, p.399). Music was used in the home for a combination of entertainment and child-minding, often while parents get other jobs done, and education, resulting in 'edutainment'.

Brooks (2015a, 2015b) investigated music of screen media produced for young children, and the ways in which it was used and interpreted in their everyday lives. Her study confirmed a "rapidly expanding market of media products targeting babies and toddlers, and widespread use of these products by participant families" (p.270). Brook's referred to these products as "infant-targeted media products that were believed to be educational in nature of potential" (p.270) and reported that the marketing of these products for children under the age of three was based on parent testimony and "representations of the products as being capable of providing an educational head start for babies" rather than based on empirical research (Brooks, 2105a, p.271). For most of the participants in the study, advertising was more influential than authoritative advice (Brooks, 2015b).

2.9.3 Early childhood settings and music

More children are experiencing music in formal care settings at younger ages due to the changing social fabric of our society, with the uptake of work by mothers leading to formal childcare requirements outside of the home. This may lead to early music experiences being carried out in childcare settings, or an expectation from parents that this is the case. Changes in the role of child 'care' to child 'early learning', or 'education' may influence parent perception of who is ultimately responsible for some of the early learning experiences, including musical ones. De Vries (2009) reported that the parents in his focus study were clear in their belief that preschools, and later schools, were responsible for young children's daily music interaction and later their music education. Yet Nardo and colleagues (2006) reported that preschool teachers felt underprepared and undertrained to conduct music programs, so the most common musical activity they used with the children was informal and unaccompanied singing (Nardo, Custodero, Pesellin, &Fox, 2006).

Further research supports the notion that early childhood teachers do not feel confident to include music in their classrooms, and feel they lack the requisite musical knowledge (Campbell, 2010; de l'Etoile, 2001; Suthers, 2004). Tertiary training of early childhood teachers includes inadequate music provision, with an average of only 17 hours of music teaching allocated per degree (Letts, 2015). This is concerning in light of research that suggests poor preparation of teachers can lead to limited confidence to present music experiences in the classroom, and fears of losing control (Bainger, 2010; Ballantyne & Packer, 2004). And even in a case where professional development was provided to childcare teachers who were not music specialists, the teacher was unable to implement a comprehensive developmental music program (De Vries, 2006).

Thus the potential expectation from parents that educators in the early childhood sector are responsible for early music experiences, coupled with a lack of teacher knowledge and expertise may mean children are not receiving quality music experiences in this sector. The absence of national guidelines for music curriculum for the zero to five sector provision further undermines the opportunities for quality experiences (Barrett, Flynn, & Welch, 2016) and means that music experiences presented to children largely reflects the musical capabilities of the childcare workers (Barrett, 2017 in press). While childcare educators highly valuing music is important for music to be included in day to day experiences, it is not enough. Barrett and colleagues (2016) presented a case study of a childcare centre where staff highly valued music in the children's learning and development, yet few were experienced in music education or alert to the policy or resources that might guide their music practice (Barrett et al, 2016).

2.9.4 The 'professional' and formal music programs for parents and children

In light of the changes outlined so far, it is possible that parents are also turning to the 'expert' to guide their use of music in the home and wider community. This century has seen a formalisation of general early childhood experiences that once happened traditionally in the home or community environment (Abad & Barrett, 2017). Adachi and Trehub (2012) describe this phenomenon in relation to music as the "new frontier of music education or intervention aimed at infants, parents and even expectant parents" (p. 229). It represents a change in the way some parents use music in our modern society. That is, using music more formally for younger children, and often with input from people seen as 'professionals'.

Formal music programs run by 'professionals' present parents with options for accessing both the music professional and the content of the classes that have been tied to better outcomes for children through research marketing. Blackburn (2017) reported on a study that surveyed and interviewed parents in the UK with a focus on the musical activities of children aged birth to five in the home. One unexpected finding was the wide range of organised, structured musical activities that 64% of the children were participating in outside the home (n=125) (Blackburn, 2017). Some parents reported that these groups helped increase their confidence in music by encouraging them to join in and "have a go" (Blackburn, 2017, p. 20). For the children, the parents reported that the highest perceived benefits were related to social interaction and development first, and communication outcomes second (Blackburn, 2017).

Some researchers have voiced concerns about the possibility that findings from neuro-scientific research on the effects of music and music learning may be used indiscriminately to justify music for younger children, particularly in marketing products and services for parents, such as music classes (Adachi & Trehub, 2012; Young, 2005). Young urges a more "cautious and rigorous approach in adopting evidence from research to validate musical activity" (Young, 2005, p. 290).This includes using outcomes from studies conducted with adults or older children to suggest the same benefits will apply to a young child (Rauscher, 2002; Young, 2007).

Other researchers have identified that increased awareness of music without adequate training to understand how music supports early childhood development can lead to inappropriate choices in pedagogy when conducting music programs for young children (Pitt & Hargraves, 2016). Pitt and Hargreaves (2016) reported on a UK community incentive that offered free access to group music sessions for families with young children. These groups were conducted by practitioners with both formal music and non-formal music training. What became clear to the researchers was that all of the practitioners were aware of the benefits of music for early childhood learning and development,

parent-child bonding and communication, but this understanding alone did not equip the non-musician practitioners to run the groups with appropriate music and group leadership pedagogy. Blackburn also reported concerns from parents about the qualifications and knowledge held by the professionals who organised the music groups and the quality of music provision within these settings (Blackburn, 2017).

Young and Gillen (2007) raise concerns that many commercial music programs are "scaled-down versions of sociable and entertaining group singing sessions designed for older children" rather than designed to meet the specific needs of infants and young children (Young et al., 2007). Young's concerns are pertinent in light of research that has identified program content as key to improved self-reported outcomes for mothers who participated in a music and movement group (Vlismas, Malloch & Burnham, 2013).

Currently in many western countries, including Australia, there are no government legislated guidelines or regulations that inform the quality of the content of music programs or minimum standards for the training of those who design and/or conduct them. There is also limited research that could inform such policy. Henriksson-Macaulay and Welch (2015) surmised that in recent years quality music education and music therapy for babies and toddlers has been "acquiring more and more confirmation for its nurturing potential" (Henriksson-Macaulay & Welch, 2015, p. 6). They describe these programs as child-centred in approach and age-appropriate in methodology to meet child developmental outcomes, such as communication and movement skills; and to meet the social and emotional needs of the parent-child dyad within the group setting (Henriksson-Macaulay & Welch; 2015).

At any given time, there is a range of music programs that are commercially available to parents. It would be impossible to surmise if they all fulfil the description provided by Henriksson-Macaulay & Welch (2015). These programs range in access, philosophy, musical pedagogy, staff qualifications and resourcing requirements. Some provide targeted intervention for families and are funded by government (Abad & Edwards, 2004; Nicholson et al., 2008); while others are universally accessible through local councils (De Vries, 2008; Pitt & Hargreaves, 2016). Others are subsidised by church organisations (Mackenzie and Hamlett, 2005) while yet more are accessible through a user pay fee structure only (Abad, 2017; Abad & Barrett, 2017; Adachi & Trehub, 2012).

2.9.4.1 A local snapshot of commercially available programs in a geographic setting

Parents have an array of choices when it comes to attending a formal music program with their children. To provide an example of the amount of choice available, a Google and web search[2] conducted in May, 2017 led to 81 potential user-pay groups available each week to parents in a large metropolitan Australian city. These groups were run by a total of 31 businesses or providers, offering a number of groups across various locations[3]. These music programs were based either on music education principles or provided by music schools (e.g. *Kindermusik*, Kodaly, Forte), music therapy principles, or were defined broadly as music and movement programs with no underpinning music pedagogy outlined.

Programs based on music education principles were the most prominent located in 46 different regions, comprising:

- 14 *Kindermusik* accredited teachers across 27 locations
- 11 Kodaly accredited music teachers across 11 locations
- 2 music businesses based on Kodaly principle across three locations
- 6 music schools in nine locations
- 3 independent businesses run by qualified music teachers in five locations

Other user pay programs available included:

- 3 programs based on music therapy principles at 14 locations
- 2 international business franchises based on a music and movement program at three locations
- 1 early childhood business offering a music, movement and sensory program at 13 locations.

Across these programs, there were differences in structure and design, staffing qualifications, training requirements, implementation, and resourcing. For example, some *Kindermusik* programs were run by facilitators qualified in music, music education or primary education, while others were run by people who had passed the singing test online and completed the online training course

[2] A Google search of key terms, and a search of three leading children's online forums and advertising pages (Brisbane Kids, Bub Hub and What's On for Little Ones) was conducted. This resulted in 31 different businesses / music programs offering user-pay music groups for children and their families. Further searches of key phrases 'music classes in Brisbane'; 'music groups for children'; 'music groups for children in Brisbane' and 'baby music groups Brisbane' confirmed these listings and pushed through to paid advertising to websites for two international models of music education – Kindermusik and Kodaly do-re-mi, and one website for music teachers.

[3] One of these businesses is owned and operated by me. It is included in this research and cleared by ethics. For further information please refer to Chapter 3.7

without formal music qualifications. Music and movement programs were conducted by early childhood teachers with no formal music training, whilst music therapy informed groups were predominately run by qualified music therapists, or music teachers with additional training.

2.10 Music Early Learning Programs to support parenting and family function

There is no doubt that the quality of a child's life is enriched by participation in a wide range of music activities (Jellison, 2006), both in the home and the community. For parents seeking music outside of the home, a high quality music program may provide support and access to information and resources that will encourage greater use of music in the home (Abad & Barrett, 2017; Byrne & Hourigan, 2010). Music in the home can provide a context in which parents and children can engage in home learning that will support the development of range of skills (Williams et al., 2015). Given that high frequency of early shared music making impacts positively on these developmental outcomes (Williams et al, 2015) it would seem pertinent that parents are comfortable using music and feel supported to do so.

2.10.1 Defining the Music Early Learning Program

There is a space that exists between music early learning at home, and formal music education that begins with schooling. Abad and Barrett (2017) suggest this is where the Music Early Learning Program sits. Within this space, the MELP provides a

> social and cultural community group environment where families with young children can come together to engage in live and interactive music making and learning with a trained group leader. The program may be informed by music therapy, music education or community music principles, or the combination of these. (Abad & Barrett, 2017, pp.144-145)

While researchers have identified that music groups can support parents and provide them with ways to use music in the home (Abad, 2011; Barrett, 2009; 2011; 2012c; Tafuri, 2008), few have examined how attendance impacts home music use.

2.10.2 Music Early Learning Programs to support parenting and family function

Barrett (2009, 2011, 2012c, 2016a, 2017 in press) has extensively studied the ways young children and their families engage with and use music in their daily lives. This has included investigating the ways that attendance at a MELP and the musical elements of the MELP supports family function and relationships. These studies have identified that MELPs can support family unity and strengthen roles and relationships in the home (Barrett, 2009), as well as support childhood development and

personal and emotional growth (Barrett, 2009, 2011, 2012c, 2016a). Across the traditional learning and developmental milestones of cognitive growth and language acquisitions; physical, social and emotional development and regulation, music making strategies learnt through the MELP were seen to support and bolster the family's use of music in the home. Music to support children in their identity work was also explored and support structures from the MELP were again identified in the home environment (Barrett, 2006). This was particularly noted in the way that the parents and children adopted and adapted MELP strategies, songs, games, routines, and other learnings and incorporated these into their home rituals and routines (Barrett, 2009, 2011, 2012c).

Barrett (2009) reported how one family drew on the skills and knowledge developed through attending a MELP to feel more confident in their parenting role. "*Kindermusik* gave me the encouragement and the confidence to really interact and play with my baby" the mother reported in an interview with the researcher (Barrett, 2009, p.123). The father also felt that the MELP was crucial in his education as a parent. He reported that "you absolutely lose touch of playing with kids. And the music is a tool to help you play with the kids and introducing one-on-one with your children…through *Kindermusik*, you've got something, a way forward" (Barrett, 2009, p.123). For these parents, the songs and activities of the MELP provided them with a repertoire of strategies that promoted interaction and engagement with their children (Barrett, 2009). They also took from the program strategies that were modelled during class time to capture and focus children's attention, regulate mood, support language development and support the acquisition of new skills through repetitious play (Barrett, 2009). These were all skills that were transferrable to the home environment for incorporation into daily life. Furthermore, engagement through song and musical activity provided this mother with a means through which to establish her identity as a parent and develop skills and techniques that she could then take up in her parenting work (Barrett, 2009).

Ilari (2016) points out that social interactions help us develop a sense of belonging. Participating in MELPs may help parents identify with their musical selves, connect with a social support group they can identify with, and support the child to develop their innate musicality. Barrett (2012c) provides a narrative case example that illustrated how music and strategies from the MELP became part of the everyday lives and relationships of a young boy and his family. For Jay, music is "an integral part of his life" (Barrett, 2011, p.174). It marks his routines, moments of quiet, moments of exuberance, his communication with others, and his moments with himself. Jay uses music for play, to interact, and to learn. He is exposed to a wide variety of music through his parents' eclectic music collection, through a song circle he attends with his mother at the local library and through attendance at a MELP for one 15-week semester. Songs learnt at the MELP were evident in his play as were MELP structures, such as singing the "hello" song to his little brother. He also sang songs

learnt through modern media (DVDs) in his play and interactions with his family, and songs learnt from family members from popular culture. Song is important in Jay's life, it provides a soundtrack that is "constant, varied, and woven in to the family routines and practices" (Barrett, 2012c, p.180). He interacts with his mother and brother through song and this reflects that positive modelling of singing and music engagement he has been exposed to throughout his life.

While Barrett's research identifies the benefits of participation in a MELP for parents, there is still further research required to better understand the reasons why parents attend, what they hope to gain by attending, and their perceptions of how attendance helps them in their parenting. Pitt and Hargreaves (2016, 2017) reported that parents perceived the "social, emotional and learning benefits for children" as the most important reasons for including music in a free community music program (Pitt and Hargreaves, 2016, p.6). To date, there is little known concerning the reasons why parents invest and pay for similar programs. Furthermore, research to date has not clearly identified if there are structures of a MELP that shape the way music is used in the home, and if so, how they assist in everyday parenting roles and music use at home. This study aims to address these gaps in the literature by responding to the following research questions:

1. What reasons do parents provide for attending MELPs?
2. What do parents hope to gain by participating in a MELP
    a. for themselves?
    b. for their children?
3. How does participation in a MELP shape the way music is used at home?

2.11 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have provided a critical review of the literature that demonstrates the many ways music has been used over time to support family well-being, functionality and unity; and the ways it supports early childhood development, emotional growth and awareness. It would seem "vital that we strive to create learning environments in which such engagement with music is encouraged and supported" (Barrett, 2016a, p.13). A MELP that is well planned, structured and competently led may create a learning environment in which parents are supported and encouraged to engage with music and identify with their musical selves, thus empowering them to use music in the home with confidence.

The true measure of a nation's standing is how well it attends to its children - their health and safety, material security, education and socialisation, and their sense of being loved, valued, and included in the families and societies into which they are born (UNICEF 2007, 6). Given we know

music exposure from a young age influences parent-child attachment, brain development, and health and well-being in families, it would seem fitting families have access to and the confidence to use music in their homes and in their communities. With the rise of formal music programs in the early childhood space, research is needed to help establish how music programs can support family function both in the music group and in the home.

The next four chapters of this thesis address the gaps in literature outlined here, through narrative case studies that tell the story of five family's musical journeys, and how MELP attendance shaped their journeys.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology, methods and techniques employed for this research study. It begins with a justification of the methodological approach, followed by a presentation of the research design, including the data generation and analysis, methods and techniques used to interpret the findings and timeline. The research participants are presented and the research context provided. Finally, ethical issues in this research are considered and discussed and matters of credibility are presented and explored as the counterparts of qualitative research.

3.1 Choosing a research paradigm that reflects a world view

The selection of a theoretical paradigm involves identifying the underlying epistemological and ontological basis the researcher plans to use to construct a scientific investigation (Krauss, 2005). The term epistemology is used to describe the philosophy, or science of knowledge, and how we come to know (Kenny, 2005a). Epistemological questions ask "what is the nature of the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known?" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), leading onto questions of methodology that refer to the particular practices used to construct knowledge (Krauss, 2005). Ontology refers to the philosophy of reality, and in research asks "what is the form and nature of reality and therefore what is there that can be known about it?" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). A paradigm represents a way of thinking about the world (Tudge, 2008) and can be defined as "the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, 105). Thus it is a "theory of theories, or a way of thinking at the level of theory" (Tudge, 2008, p.56).

This study is situated within a constructivist research paradigm, conducted within a contextualist framework. A constructivist approach fits within the nonpositivist perspective (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, 2005) of studying the "lived world of human beings and how that world is subjectively constituted, construed, and made meaningful by individuals and groups" (Bruscia, 2005a, p.83). In a seminal turning point in our thinking about 'truth', Popper (1942) argued that truly quantifiable data alone, as a representation of objectivity, is not possible as there is no such thing as data free from interpretation (Popper, 1942). Constructivists accept that there can be multiple ways of knowing the world, and therefore of experiencing and understanding it. While positivists employ a range of techniques to separate themselves from the world they study, constructivists imbed themselves in natural settings (Krauss, 2005) to understand better and express the qualities and experiences. Constructivists do not assume that there is a "single unitary reality apart from our perceptions" (Krauss, 2005 p.760) as each person has their own experience of reality, thus there is

no objective reality but rather multiple realities (Krauss, 2005). This research seeks to investigate the perception of parents and make meaning of how these influence their decisions to attend music programs and behaviours in the way they use music at home. Constructivism as a paradigm allows the researcher to observe and study the families within their cultural context, and allows for multiple views of what parents constitute as their reality.

3.2 Contextualism

Different modes of research allow us to understand different phenomena and for different reasons (Deetz, 1996). Child development researcher Jonathon Tudge identifies a contextualist ontology or view of reality, as one that "sees a multiplicity of realities, rather than a single reality" (Tudge, 2008, p.59). Furthermore, people's perception of reality is shaped by their specific circumstances and therefore changes in response to resources, time, power and local situations (Tudge, 2008). Contexts are complex, dynamic, and nested with in the larger cultural, political and historical frameworks of the phenomena being studied (Hatch, 2002). Contextualism thereby acknowledges the impacts of context on the phenomenon and the participants' experience of this phenomenon.

Differing views of reality continue throughout life but can be particularly pertinent to early childhood, where children are influenced by parents, birth order, culture, resources and numerous other daily events. This can be seen where family members, raised in the same environment by the same parents can have different experiences and differing perceptions of reality.

A contextualist epistemology is one that includes the knower, or researcher, as a co-constructor of what is to be known. From an epistemological standpoint, the researcher is not separate from the research; rather, the researcher co-constructs meaning in as naturalistic an environment as possible with the participants, thus examining "the course of their very experiencing" in real time (Tudge, 2008, p.62). This allows the researcher to examine how people interpret and make meaning of their day-to-day experiences.

Meanings refer to a person's view of reality and are used to help define their actions (Krauss, 2005). They are the "cognitive categories that make up one's view of reality and with which actions are defined" (Krauss, 2005, p.762). A person draws meaning from, or gives meanings to, events and experiences, thus "meaning and meaning making have many implications for learning" (Krauss, 2005, p763). The way a person views their reality, and therefore makes meaning, is influenced by many factors, including the ecological and sociocultural environment in which they are born, grow up and live. Thus the everyday lives of people are heavily influenced by their families and significant others who interact with them daily, their social environment, social class, family

resources, community resources, culture and how all of these plus many other factors interact with them.

The construction of meaning has been described by Steven Krauss (2005) as the "task of qualitative research" (Krauss, 2005, p.763). This discovery of meaning is an "intensely human act" (Kenny, 2005a, p.59) and requires the use of methods that fit within the paradigm that informs and guides the research, the ontology and epistemology which are translated into distinct methodological strategies (Krauss, 2005). A contextualist framework is therefore important in this research as it will assist to make meaning of the reasons why parents attend MELPs and understand better how this attendance impacts the child, who is situated within the context of their family, community and culture, all of which impact on the child's early life experiences.

3.3 Methodology that sits within a contextualist framework

This research study combines the ethnographic methodologies of 'everyday' research (Tudge, 2008) and case study (Stake, 2005) with the relational qualities of narrative inquiry (Barrett, 2009a, 2011; Barrett & Stauffer, 2012) to identify and make meaning of the ways in which parents invest and utilise music to facilitate their parenting in their 'everyday' lives. The research study is conducted within a contextualist framework. This ensures that simultaneous attention is paid to the individual and their context, and the actions and interactions that occur between these individuals and their social environment, in a way that does not separate the individuals from the context in which they are situated or the researcher from the participants in the research (Tudge, 2008). For this reason, it is impossible to separate the parent who exposes the child to music, from the context in which the parent's music exposure, experience and development occurs, nor the context from the culture that influences the parents' choice of music use and the child's early life and development. That is why culture is inextricably a part of any contextualist theory (Tudge, 2008). Culture is implicated in development because of the types of settings, partners, activities and interactions that take place within the child's everyday life (p.3), and different cultures have access to different resources and power (Tudge, 2008). What people do within their culture on a regular basis are the things that influence development (Tudge, 2008).

While contextualism has been viewed critically by some for its focus on conditions that shape the phenomenon (Hatch, 2002), others suggest that this focus is the advantage offered as this allows the culturally and specifically situated context of the people being studied to inform the research (Cohen, 2000). For this study, a contextualist focus helped provide a more comprehensive approach to the research as it concentrated on the understanding of the particular (Hatch, 2002).

3.3.1 'Everyday' research

Qualitative research often takes place in natural or real-world settings, where the researcher makes no attempt to control the settings in which the phenomenon is situated (Kenny, 2005a). This allows the researcher to understand better the meaning people have constructed, or how they "make sense" of their world and their experiences in their world (Merriam, 1998, p.6). This requires the researcher to be the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Merriam, 1998). This naturalistic inquiry approach fits well when researching activities that occur in everyday life, such as music making, as music engagement is "central to the cultural practices and circumstances of many young children's experience of the 'everyday' and has been acknowledged as a powerful force in early development" (Barrett, 2009, p.116). Margaret Barrett has pioneered the use of research methods that allow for naturalistic interactions and behaviours to be observed in these settings including observations of families, video and paper diaries that capture day-to-day music making, and formal and informal interviews (Barrett, 2009, 2011, 2012c, 2016a, 2017 in press).

For the current study, observing the families in their naturalistic settings, that is: their home and community, allows both the parent and the child to be co-participants in this study rather than objects of the study. It also allows me as the researcher the opportunity to examine experiences as they happen over time, rather than in retrospect, and to reflect and interrogate these in consultation with each family.

3.3.2 Ethnography

Observing children's participation in and use of music in their everyday situated lives allows for the study of social practice, and given the cultural nature of human beings, this is necessarily a cultural practice (Stige, 2005). If human interaction is studied within a cultural practice, ethnography provides an appropriate method to do so. Ethnography is considered by some to be the "original and quintessential qualitative research method" (Bannister, Burnam, Parker, Taylor & Tindall, 1994, p.34) that has been well developed in sociology, anthropology and more recently psychology (Griffin & Bengry-Howell, 2008). It can be defined as a "scholarly approach to the study of culture as lived, experienced, and expressed by a person or a group of people" (Stige, 2005, p.392). Ethnography is an interdisciplinary research tradition relevant in settings where people interact with and are embedded in culture (Stige, 2005).

Ethnography was originally used as a research technique to describe the cultures of other social groups (Griffin & Bengry-Howell, 2008). It grew from the European colonial desire to understand the indigenous peoples who lived in the lands that they colonised (Stige, 2005). Since then

ethnography has been used to understand sociological changes within cultures, as seen by the Chicago School in the 1930s (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). More recently, feminism and postcolonial perspectives have shaped the development and use of ethnography as a research technique (Stige, 2005). Contemporary ethnography emphasises the importance of "understanding meanings and cultural practices of people from within everyday context" (Griffin & Bengry-Howell, 2008, p.16).

"Ethnographers learn from what people do, what they say and sing, and what they make and use" (Stige, 2005, p.396). They do this by uncovering meaning in the everyday lives of people by gathering descriptive data that involves the thick description of information collected through observations and interviews, and interpretations of texts and artefacts (Eriksen, 1995; Kenny, 2005a; Stige, 2005), including field notes, and diaries (Stige, 2005). Meaning is searched for, and told through an effective story (Stige, 2005), and story "is the simplest and most direct way to define a narrative" (Kenny, 2005b, p.416).

3.3.3 Narrative Inquiry

The tradition of storytelling is a human one, and one that has accompanied our evolution from pre-literate cultures (Barrett & Stauffer, 2009b; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006) to now. The capacity to speak, and therefore construct a version of events is a distinguishing human trait (Barrett & Stauffer, 2012) and can be seen clearly in the oral traditions of some of the world's oldest cultures. As humans, we use stories to interpret our experiences, to teach our children, and to make meaning of our lives. Therefore narratives can be seen as a means of constructing meaning from experiences that are told through stories (Mattingly & Garro, 2000). However, it is important to note that "whilst narrative is story, not all story is narrative inquiry" (Barrett & Stuaffer, 2009b, p.10).

Qualitative research is primarily characterised by its use of data in narrative form (Polkinghorne, 1995). Narrative inquiry refers to a subset of qualitative research designs in which stories are used to describe human action (Polkinghorne, 1995). It is the study of experience as story (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). It begins with ontology of experience (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007) and involves the collection and re-telling of stories through careful analysis of told stories within the context of the research participant, the researcher, and the cultural narratives in which they sit (Barrett & Stauffer, 2009a). Narrative inquirers use this information to study experience (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007), thus it is first and foremost a way of thinking about experience (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006), and a way of understanding experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The experience is studied as it unfolds in time and is characterised by its interaction with the environments the person lives in, thus making it a transactional, rather than transcendental experience (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). This is because "narrative inquiries explore the stories people live and tell. These stories are

the result of a confluence of social influences on a person's inner life, social influences on their environment, and their unique personal history. These stories are often treated as the epiphenomenal to social inquiry— reflections of important social realities but not realities themselves" (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p.41).

While the history of storytelling is nearly as old as humanity itself, its use in academia is not. Most academic work is non-narrative (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007), but recently there has been a re-emergence of this method as a "legitimate field of study, means of communication, and orientation toward truth" (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007, p.30). This has occurred as researchers have questioned the ideals of objectivity, reliability and generalisability when studying social phenomena (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). In particular, these changes in the way of thinking have been in reference to the relationship between the researcher and the researched; the move from numbers to words as data; the change from a general focus to a more local and specific focus; and the widening acceptance of the multiple ways of knowing (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). To understand the experience of people through their own words and actions is to attempt to understand the different nature of experiences. Words can translate experience more clearly than numbers when trying to understand human interaction and experience (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). They can also clearly portray that not everyone experiences the same reality even in the same situation, thus reinforcing the understanding that there are multiple ways of knowing.

People understand and recapitulate their experiences in storied form (Mischler, 1986b cited in Polkinghorne, 1995). For the purposes of this study, stories are used as a way of investigating experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Data is elicited through a range of sources including surveys, interviews, observations, journals and videos and analysed through narrative inquiry, to answer the research questions in the form of a narrative case study.

3.3.3.1 Analysis of Narrative and Narrative Analysis

There are two distinct approaches to the analysis of narrative inquiries, as established by Polkinghorne. These are narrative analysis and analysis of narratives (Polkinghorne, 1995). Narrative analysis is the process by which researchers investigate studies whose data consist of actions, events, and happenings, and whose analysis produces stories such as case studies (Polkinghorne, 1995). For the current study, my task was to create a story, by configuring and synthesising the data elements into an emplotted narrative (Polkinghorne, 1995). Data employed in narrative analyses for this study did not come in a storied form, rather narrative was used to "produce stories as the outcome of the research" (Polkinghorne, 1995, p.15).

Analysis of narratives is the process by which researchers collect stories as data and analyse them with paradigmatic processes, resulting in descriptions of themes that hold across the stories, thus their analysis produces paradigmatic typologies or categories (Polkinghorne, 1995). Paradigmatic analysis provides a method to uncover the commonalities that exist across stories, allowing researchers to develop general knowledge about a collection of stories (Polkinghorne, 1995). In this study, five narrative case studies were compared for similarities in themes to help develop general knowledge about why these parents attended a MELP, what they hoped to gain by attending and how their attendance shaped the way they used music in their homes.

3.3.4 Case Study

Qualitative case study research developed during the first decades of the 20th Century in the schools of sociology and anthropology and was the dominant research approach at the beginning of modern social science (Blatter, 2008). A case study is a "research approach in which one or a few instances of a phenomenon are studied in depth" (Blatter, 2008, p.68). Many an attempt has been made to define the case study, resulting in a "definitional morass" (Flyvbjerg, 2011, p.302). Flyvbjerg (2011) suggests a straightforward definition is best when trying to understand the place of a case study within a constructivist paradigm. He suggests that the Merriam-Webster definition of a case study as "an intensive analysis of an individual unit (as a person or community) stressing developmental factors in relation to environment" (Flyvbjerg, 2011, p.301) is useful. This definition allows us to see how the case study sits within a system that can be studied in a set time and context. This allows for the study of a phenomenon through the lens of a case. A variety of data sources are typically used to inform the case study (Yin, 2009).

Merriam explains that the "case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. The interest is in process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation" (Merriam, 1998, p.19). Case studies are used often in constructivist research as they focus on the individual's experience within their cultural context, and allow the researcher to study the case in depth (Blatter, 2008). They can include as many variables as possible and portray their interaction, often over a period of time (Merriam, 1998). For this reason, a case study is often descriptive, and provides a rich, thick description of the phenomenon under study (Merriam, 1998). A case can be researched because we want to understand better the specific singular case, or generate more knowledge by understanding a particular case (Smeijesters & Aasgaard, 2005).

Case studies can be descriptive, interpretive or evaluative in their focus, with many tending to overlap and be a combination of descriptive and interpretive, or descriptive and evaluative

(Merriam, 1998). A descriptive case study presents a detailed account of the phenomenon under study, and is not driven by a hypothesis or theory (Merriam, 1998). Both descriptive and interpretive case studies contain rich, thick descriptions of the case at hand. Interpretive case studies are used to develop conceptual categories or challenge theories (Merriam, 1998). Evaluative case studies involve description, explanation and judgement (Merriam, 1998). Where knowledge and understanding requires a broader, or multifaceted insight more than one case may be studied (Smeijesters & Aasgaard, 2005). For this study, descriptive case studies presented as narratives, are used to provide rich data on each family's use of music through attendance at a MELP within their cultural context.

3.3.4.1 Narrative Case Studies

Case studies contain a substantial element of narrative (Flyvbjerg, 2011). Narrative case studies are a series of cases that are faithful to the principles of narrative inquiry. They provide an account that illustrates a theme by threading together varying data that emerge from interview, video and observation. For this study, narrative as a case study has been used to make sense of the world, by "constructing it as narrative" (Flyvbjerg, 2011, p.311).

3.4 The Current Research Design

This study takes the form of a narrative case study of five Australian families enrolled in Music Early Learning Programs (MELPs). It sits within a larger ARC Discovery Grant *'Being and becoming musical: towards a cultural ecological model of early musical development'* (Barrett & Welch, 2012) which investigates music learning and engagement through four strands covering music in the lives of families who: are currently enrolled in MELPs, who have been enrolled in MELPs in the past, are not enrolled in MELPS, and access music in childcare. This research study is a sub-study of the ARC strand *Musical Parenting and Musical Play* and specifically aims to make meaning of the reasons why parents invest in music early learning for their children through enrolling in and attending a MELP, what they hope to gain by attending, and how attendance shapes the use of music at home.

The study employs various methods of data collection; including survey, interview, observation, and video and diary entries; collected over a period of 12 to18 months, as a means to document the everyday experiences of the five families. The longitudinal timeline allowed for in-depth study of how families engaged musically, both in their home and at their MELPs, and the influence of the latter in the home setting. These data were analysed and interpreted using narrative inquiry as the key methodology to construct the five narrative case studies, and analysis of narrative to identify

commonalities across the case studies. These were grouped into themes and patterns to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. What reasons do parents provide for attending MELPs?
2. What do parents hope to gain by participating in a MELP
    a. For themselves?
    b. For their children?
3. How does participation in a MELP shape the way music is used at home?

3.5 Timeline of the study

The timeline for the study was 18 to 24 months. Recruitment of families took up to six months, and then data collection spanned 12 to 18 months. The data were then generated in three phases of the study, as outlined in Table 1: commencement, continuation and completion. Using this timeline to guide the generation and collection of data allowed for the interpretation of data as it became available, and the opportunity to adjust the interview questions if required.

Table1: The research study timeframe

Data source	*Recruitment Phase*	*Phase 1* Commencement		*Phase 2* Continuation of the research study				*Phase 3* Completion		
Timeline		Term 1 2014	Term 2 2014	Term 3 2014	Term 4 2014	Term 1 2015	Term 2 2015	T 3 2015	T 4 2015	T 1 2016
Recruit	•	•	•	•	•	• *				
Survey		•	•	•	•	• *				
Interview 1		•	•	•	•	• *				
Interview 2				•	•	•	•	•		
Interview 3						•	•	•	•	•
Observation 1 at MELP			•			•				
Observation 2 at MELP				•	•	•	•	•		

Video Diary		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Weekly Diary		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Field Notes		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Survey						•	•	•	•	•

**2 new recruits joined the study in Term 1 of 2015*

3.5.1 Recruitment phase

3.5.1.1 Recruitment for the ARC Study

This study commenced with the recruitment of a minimum of 20 families to participate in the ARC MELP study Strand 2.2. Businesses that offered music groups or classes for children and their families in both city and regional centres were approached informally and invited to participate as recruitment sites. A formal letter was sent (see Appendix A) to those businesses that agreed to participate. This provided a description of the study and a consent form to be completed by the MELP leader who would act as a gatekeeper for the research study.

Gatekeepers used a variety of methods to gauge if parents were interested in participating in the study. This included face to face conversations with families and announcements of their participation in the study on Facebook pages and in newsletters. Once parents registered their interest in the study, gatekeepers handed out personal letters inviting these particular families to participate (see Appendix B) and consent forms for them to complete. Parents then returned these to the gatekeeper, who forwarded them to the research team.

Of the 36 families recruited from six different MELPs in three different geographic settings, 29 families commenced the study from three MELPs, and 19 completed the study (Abad, Barrett & Welch, 2015), as outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: Total number of families involved in the ARC study 2, sub study 2.

MELP	Number recruited	Number started	Number who did not start	Number who withdrew	Incomplete data	Complete data sets
MELP 1*	4	4	0	1	0	3
MELP 2	5	5	0	0	0	5

MELP 3	21	18	3	2	5	11
MELP 4	1	1	0	0	1	0
MELP 5	2	1	1	1		0
MELP 6	3	0	3	0		0
TOTAL	36	29	7	4	6	19

*MELP names have been removed to protect the identity of the participants in the study

3.7.1.2 Recruitment for the PhD study

For this specific study, a diversity of cases was required in order to answer the research questions. Purposive sampling was used to choose families. This process is a "conscious selection of a small number of data sources that meet particular criteria" (Russel & Gregory, 2003, p.37). The criteria are outlined as follows:

3.7.1.2.1 Diversity across program theoretic framework.

Initially, it was hoped that a family could be chosen from four different MELPs in the study that represented different theoretic frameworks. This included two music education programs, one based on the Kodaly approach to music education, the other based on the *Kindermusik* license model; and two based on music therapy principles and approaches to music and families. One MELP closed down however, and one research participant withdrew, leaving participants from three MELP programs for inclusion in the case study final selection. One of these MELPs was located within the business I run.

3.7.1.2.2 Full rich research data sets

There were complete data sets for 19 families from the three MELPs eligible for selection for the final case studies. Within these 19 sets, there needed to be a rich diversity and depth in the data. Some families, for example, completed the research study keeping only video diaries and no written diary entries, or vice versa. Some families provided only a few video diaries or very limited diary notes that could not be teased out for in-depth knowledge. For some families interviews were straight forward, questions were answered and interviews were wrapped up, while other families spoke for longer periods of time, delved into their musical pasts and reflected on ways they felt this had influenced their current day decisions regarding their children and music involvement. Where there was an imbalance in data provided, families were not considered for inclusion in this in-depth research approach.

3.7.2.2.3 Diversity in the data

Diversity within the data was also sought to represent a range of family and child contexts and musical experiences, beliefs and identities. This included family structure; family income and employment; number of children in the family; cultural background of the family; parental past experiences with music and relationship to music, including past music education, exposure and current day music practice. For the children, sibling relationships, birth order, gender, and developmental concerns were reviewed for consideration in inclusion for the study.

3.5.2 Phase 1 – Commencement

After recruitment all 36 families completed the consent forms and were then considered enrolled in the study. I sent each family an introductory email welcoming them to the project. At this point of contact, a time was set for the first interview and survey to be conducted, and for the weekly diary template and video camera to be handed over to each family. Twenty-nine families began the study and an observation visit was scheduled for their MELP.

Each MELP was conducted during school terms, so a time was generally set for the next school term, thus being roughly three months after the commencement of the study and first interview. Contact was maintained during this initial three-month period via emails and phone calls to check in and answer questions relating to data collection, follow up with families to see how they were managing their new role as co-researcher, and to ensure carry out with data collection tasks.

3.5.3 Phase 2 - Continuation of the research study

During this next phase of the study, (three to 12 months) families continued their video and written diaries notes, and I conducted a site visit to observe the family at their MELP, and to conduct the second interview. Where possible, the interview was conducted in person, or on the phone, and was recorded and transcribed.

3.5.3 Phase 3 – Completion

The final phase of the research study involved a second MELP observation visit for each family and a third interview 12 to 15 months post their commencement date. At the interview participants also completed the final survey. Interviews were recorded and transcribed.

3.6 Research Participants

The five families included in the narrative case studies are outlined in Tables four and five. All of the parents (Table 3) were the mothers of the children, married, with an average age of 39.2 years.

All of the participants had completed year 12 and three had completed tertiary degrees. One family spoke another language at home in addition to English. None of the families identified as ATSI.

Table 3: Demographic information of participating parents in the narrative case studies

Demographic	Fam 01	Fam 02	Fam 03	Fam 04	Fam 05
Parent gender	F	F	F	F	F
Parent age	39	37	42	42	36
Marital status	Married	Married	Married	Married	Married
ATSI	No	No	No	No	No
NESB	No	No	No	No	Yes
Education level	Undergraduate degree	Year 12	Diploma	Undergraduate degree	Postgraduate degree

The children ranged in age from 11 to 44 months with an average age of two years and three months. Just fewer than half the children were from one-child families, while the remaining children had one or two siblings. Birth order varied in the families from first to third. One child was exposed to a language other than English at home, and two children had developmental issues and additional needs. None of the children were identified as ATSI.

Table 4: Demographic information of participating children in the narrative case studies

Demographic	Fam 01 CS01	Fam 02 CS02	Fam 03 CS03	Fam 04 CS04	Fam 05 CS05
Child age	25 months	22 months	36 months	44 months	11 months
Child gender	F	M	F	M	F
Child birth order	Second	First	First	Third	Second
Number of children in the family	Two	One	One	Three	Two
Child ATSI	No	No	No	No	No
Child NESB	No	No	No	No	Yes bi-lingual
Developmental concerns	No	No	Yes	Yes	No

3.6.1 Research Participant Data Generation

The five families in the study generated data using all of the data generation techniques outlined in Section 3.5 of this chapter. These data were collated for each family and used to prepare their

individual narrative case study, and analysed as outlined in Section 3.6. In total, there were 1,672 points of data generated and included in this study. These are presented in detail in Table 6

Table 5: Data generation for the five families in the narrative case studies

Family Name*	Interview	MELP observation	Diary entries	Video diaries	Surveys	Field Notes
CS01 Renee and Nora	4	2	364	35	2	8
CS02 Sarah and Joseph	3	2	126	41	2	5
CS03 Karen and Natalie	3	2	312	30	2	8
CS04 Trisha and Angus	4	2	101	209	2	12
CS05 Claire and Harriet	3	2	21	362	2	5
Total (1672)	13	10	924	677	10	38

*Each family and child has been assigned a pseudonym

3.7 Research Context

The fieldwork for this research was conducted over 12 to 24 months from March 2014 to March 2016 as outlined in Table 2. This fieldwork was conducted at three different MELPs, during school terms. The businesses and their theoretic lens are now outlined, as each business had a different approach to delivering music to families.

MELP [3]1 is a music early learning program that is informed by music therapy and music early learning principles, and is intended to provide a space where families can come together each week to experience live and interactive music in a community group setting that aims to support and enhance child development and nurture relationships between parents and their babies through musical play and interactions (anonymised website reference, 2016). The program provides parents with practical hands-on ideas to encourage greater use of music in the home (anonymised website reference, 2016). This is achieved by developing repertoire and confidence to actively engage with music. *MELP 1* also aims to nurture and support an early love of music in families (anonymised website reference, 2016).

MELP 2 is a Music Early Learning Program for parents, their babies and young children aged 0 to 4 years that is designed and run by Registered Music Therapists. This program aims to address a range of early childhood developmental goals through the use of live music, musical play, instrument play and musical games (anonymised website reference, 2015). This includes social

[3] All website references for the MELPs have been anonymised to protect the privacy of the research participants.

skills, communication, fine and gross motor skills, emotional awareness and self-expression, self-confidence, pre-literacy and pre-numeracy skills, and school readiness. Each term the children participate in 10 sessions arranged broadly around a theme. The weekly program aims to be light and fun in nature, interactive, inclusive and child-centred (anonymised website reference, 2015).

MELP 3 is a movement and music program for newborns to the young child, that uses the *Kindermusik* licensed program and the Encore for Keys program to teach children music (website reference, 2015). *Kindermusik* is a music and movement program taught all over the world by licensed educators. It is not a franchise. Licensed educators may be those employed by other educators, or are business owners themselves. Amongst other programs, *Kindermusik* provides a four-stage curriculum carefully designed to reflect and match a child's age and developmental level. *MELP 3* teaches this four-stage curriculum. There are no prerequisites since each stage provides unique learning opportunities. To ensure that music learning is continued and enhanced at home, it is compulsory for all children and families enrolled to have a set of At Home materials related to the unit. These materials include CDs, literature books, instruments, play sets, and other items relevant to the programs content & level, and have been carefully developed by *Kindermusik* (anonymised website reference, 2015).

3.8 Methods and Techniques: design and analysis

Measures for data generation were designed at the beginning of the research study as part of the larger ARC study and are summarised in Table 6.

Table 6: Method and techniques, timeline and analysis measures

Research method	**Timeline for use**	**Why it was used**	**Methodology**	**Analysis**
Pre study self-report survey	*Phase 1* • Within the first three months	• To investigate issues of family engagement, musical self-efficacy, and health and well-being	• Survey • Narrative inquiry	• Analysis of stated beliefs and practices concerning musical parenting (Survey) • Coding for themes
Interview	*Phase 1* • 1 to 3 months *Phase 2* • 6 to 9 months *Phase 3* • 12 to18 months	• To ascertain beliefs and motivations for enrolling their child in a MELP and establish the extent of the family history of engagement in music activity	• Semi-structured • Interview schedule • Narrative inquiry	• Analysis of stated beliefs and practices concerning musical analysis of music used in the home • Impact of MELP on music observed in the

		• To ascertain hopes for their children and themselves • To better understand what happens at a MELP and how this shapes music use at home		home • Coding for themes
Observation	During *Phase 1* and *Phase 2* of the study, depending when family starts study	• To ascertain what families do in MELPs, what techniques children and parents respond to, how they interact with each other, with others and the teacher • To ascertain how MELP attendance shapes music in the home	• Everyday research • Ethnography • Observation • Narrative analysis	• Analysis of field texts (observation notes) • Coding for themes
Weekly diary entries	*Phase 1* *Phase 2* *Phase 3*	• To ascertain how families engage with and through music in their everyday culturally situated lives, and examine if participation in a MELP affects this	• Ethnography • Observation • Narrative analysis	• Analysis of field texts (diary notes) • Coding for themes
Video footage	*Phase 1* *Phase 2* *Phase 3*	• To ascertain how families engage with and through music in their everyday culturally situated lives, and examine if participation in a MELP effects this	• Ethnography • Observation • Narrative analysis	• Analysis of field texts (diary notes that accompany video) • Coding for themes
Post study self-report survey	*Phase 3*	• To reflect on learnings, changes, musical parenting insights reported by parents	• Survey • Coding for patterns • Narrative Analysis	• Analysis of stated beliefs and practices concerning musical parenting (survey) • Coding for themes
Field notes	*Phase 1* *Phase 2* *Phase 3*	• To record incidental moments or observations during home visits and MELP visits	• Analytic memos • Narrative analysis	Analysis of field texts

3.8.1 Survey

Survey research is one of the most common methodologies used in the social sciences (Julien, 2008). Surveys often take the form of questionnaires, used to gather information from individuals through the use of closed and open-ended questions. A self-report survey structure was chosen for use in this study.

3.8.1.1 Survey Design

A self-report survey was designed by the ARC research team to understand how music was being used in the daily life of families (see Appendix C). It was designed to address issues of family engagement, musical self-efficacy, music use in the home, and health and well-being. The four categories of the survey were:

Category One –'About the way you use music with your child' explored parental use of music in their everyday lives, mostly in the home by gauging frequency of engagement in a range of musical activities over the space of a typical week, and rated on a 4-point scale (no, not at all; rarely; sometimes; often; yes, very much). The first question items (n=12) were adapted from a measure used in the *Early Childhood Longitudinal Study – Kindergarten Cohort* (National Centre for Education Statistics, 2002) and the Sing & Grow National Evaluation (Nicholson et al., 2008). The second question asks parents if they agree with a range of statements that measure musical self-efficacy on a 5-point scale (strongly disagree; disagree; neither agree or disagree; agree; strongly agree) and include questions of quantity of repertoire known as well as the quality and confidence of the parent to implement musical strategies in their parenting.

Category Two – 'About you' gathers specific demographic information on the parent including age, gender, marital status, income, employment, and their ethnic and cultural identity.

Category Three – 'About you and music' explores the parent's personal relationship with music, and parenting self-efficacy. The first section explores the parent's past relationship with music through gathering information on formal music learning or singing, including choirs, and the level of music learning acquired. The survey then asks if parents still play or sing today, and if and how the parent uses music every day, including their listening habits. The second section of Category Three measures parent confidence at undertaking tasks associated raising and managing young children and their behaviours. This is measured on four items modified from the United States research study *Early Childhood Longitudinal Study – Birth Cohort* (National Centre for Education Statistics, 2004) and used in the Sing & Grow National Evaluation (Nicholson et al., 2008). A series of four questions asks parents if they feel they are very good at managing their child's behaviours

and meeting their daily care needs (four questions) on a 5-point scale (no, not at all; rarely; sometimes; often; yes, very much).

Category Four – 'About your child' gathers demographic information on the study participant child, including their gender, age, birth order, their ethnic and cultural identity, and any developmental concerns the parent may have for this child.

3.8.1.2 Survey Implementation

The surveys were piloted in Strand 1 of the ARC project, before being implemented in this study. Families completed the survey at the commencement and completion of the study in Phase 1 and Phase 3 (see timeline in section 3.7).

3.8.1.3 Survey Analysis

Each family was given a Family ID code and this was used for their descriptive data to be entered into SPSS17. These data were used as part of the narrative case studies to check family musical histories, musical self-efficacy, musical identity and use of music in the home.

3.8.2 Interview

Interview has been described as the ethnographer's most important technique (Griffin & Bengry-Howell, 2008), and can provide a "unique opportunity to uncover rich and complex information from an individual" (Cavana et al., 2001, p.138). In research, "the voices of the individuals are rarely heard" (Smith, 2009, p.81). Narrative research allows the individual to tell their story, often through the process of interview.

Interviews in this study were conducted both in person and by telephone. Where possible, face to face interviews were conducted to assist with rapport building. However sometimes long travel times for families in regional areas, meant this was not possible. In all the interviews, I worked to create a space for families to tell their story, directing the flow of the conversation where needed and actively listening to the responses. I therefore operated on three levels: the content level, where I listened to and recorded information; the process level, where I used the skills of questioning, paraphrasing, probing and attending to direct the interview; and the executive level, where I controlled the flow and timing of the interview (Cavana et al., 2001).

3.8.2.1 Interview Design

Interview questions were established as part of the larger ARC and used as a guide to conduct three semi-structured interviews with the research participants. A semi-structured interview allows a

framework to be used to inform the questions without restricting the interview to set formal questions.

The first interview was structured to allow conversation to progress in three stages: past experiences through family history of musical engagement; current practices through current engagement, beliefs and values; and future aspirations through reflecting on future plans. The interview guided the participant to recall and explore their earliest memories of music in their life, how music was used in the home, and how they engaged with music both in the home and in their local community. Interview questions also explored musical identity, asking parents to reflect on what makes someone musical, and if they identified as musical. Parents were also asked about their music experiences with formal music education growing up, and how these influenced their beliefs on musicality. Finally, participants were asked how they use music in current practices for themselves as well as throughout their life.

Current engagement, beliefs and values were discussed by reflecting on ways that parents currently used music with their children in the home and their community. This section of the interview focused on what happened at their MELP, as well as reflecting on what prompted them to enrol in a MELP, what they hoped to gain by attending, and what the child responds to or enjoys the most when at their MELP. Parents were asked if they used songs or games, resources or ideas from their MELP in the home, and if so how. Further semi-structured questions would lead to conversation about other places the child experienced music in the community (childcare, playgroup etc) and what resources the parent had at their disposal for musical play at home. Parents were also asked to describe a typical day in their child's life, and the researcher noted where music played into these. Routines and rituals that involved music were further discussed.

Future aspirations were gauged in the final section of the interview by asking parents what their plans for their child were over the next year, in respect to their use of music, their engagement with music, reflecting on why they thought music was important for their child and what they will look for in terms of their child's musical development.

The second interview was designed to be conducted approximately six months after the first interview. It followed the same structure as the first interview for current practice and future aspirations, starting with a question that placed the family in the here and now – "since we last spoke, what has been happening in your child's musical life?" This allowed the conversation to continue as directed by the parent to cover what was most relevant to them at that point in time. The interview schedule was used by the researcher to prompt the parent (if required) to reflect on any

changes they had noticed in their child's musical behaviour, ability, responses and interactions; musical preferences and musical engagement. In particular, I asked parents to reflect on who was most responsible for musical engagement in their household and what sort of things this person did. Space for video footage, diary entries and class observations and reflections was written into this interview schedule. Parents were asked if anything restricted their opportunities to make music with their children before the interview schedule moved to future reflections. In this section, parents were asked what their plans for the next six months were for their child's musical development.

The third interview followed the structure outlined for the second interview, until the last section, where parents were asked their plans for their child's musical future. At this point, parents were left to tell their story without direction, so they could focus on the immediate future or the distant future. The interview schedules can be seen in Appendix D.

3.8.2.2 Interview implementation

The first interview was conducted early in the study, during Phase 1. The second interview was generally conducted in the middle of the study during Phase 2, and the third interview was generally conducted 12 months after the family commenced in the study in Phase 3, as outlined in Section 3.7. For some families, the timeline was 18 months due to illness and other family commitments extending the timeline.

3.8.2.3 Interview analysis

Interviews were recorded by the researcher and transcribed by professional transcribers contracted to the ARC grant. They were analysed using narrative inquiry techniques to allow for the "systematic study of personal experience and meaning" (Riessman, 1993, p.70) and culminated in a narrative case study for each family in the study (see Chapters 4 to 8 for these case studies). Section 3.6 provides a detailed account of how the interviews were analysed to construct each narrative case study.

3.8.3 Observation

Observations can provide "rich data and insights into the nature of the phenomena observed" (Cavana et al., 2001, p.162). In this study, observation involved systematically planned events – music groups – in which participants were observed in a naturalistic environment. As the researcher, I was a non-participant observer (Cavana et al., 2001), often sitting at the back of a MELP taking notes. On some occasions, when this was deemed too distracting, I was a participant

observer, joining in the music group with the families. This is a common ethnographic research technique (Griffin & Bengry-Howell, 2008).

3.8.3.1 Observation Design

For the current research study, where possible, all of the observations in the moment were captured and documented during the MELP. To do this quickly and accurately, I designed a table that allowed me to capture the time and session structure, and write down what the family was doing at this time and as part of this section of the MELP (see Appendix E). Observations began five minutes before the group, continued throughout the group (45 minutes) and ended five minutes after the group. Descriptive notes kept on this sheet captured families greeting each other, catching up on news while they settled into class; interactions with the music, resources and the MELP leader during the group, interactions between the parent, child and others during the group; and interactions that occurred after the group was finished.

3.8.3.2 Observation Implementation

Observation of MELP participation occurred during Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the study, at approximately six-month intervals, as outlined in the timeline in section 3.7

3.8.3.3 Observation Analysis

Documented observations were analysed as musical, interactive with others, interactive with a prop or resource, or engagement with the parent, group facilitator or both. The advantage of observing families in the naturalistic environment of their MELP is that it allowed me to see how the families interacted in this structured music environment, and how this compared with the interviews, home video data and diary notes, to see if any of the music activities from the MELP were being used in the home or shaping the way music was used in the home in any way. A disadvantage of this observation model was my presence may have affected the way some families interacted at music on that particular day, or may have caused a distraction in the room for the children. This is why I participated in the music group on some occasions and jotted notes rather than observed only from the back of the room. How the analyses of the observations was used to construct the narrative case studies is outlined in section 3.6

3.8.4 Video Diaries

Video diaries are a form of data collection that allows everyday moments to be captured and observed in non-obtrusive ways. Video diaries allow the researcher to enter into the private realms of the home while not invading the space or removing control from the parent to decide what should

and should not be recorded. Barrett (2009, 2011, 2017, in press) pioneered this technique for studying music within the home, and thereby researched and documented musical interactions and engagements that may not have otherwise been captured or observed.

3.8.4.1 Video Diary Design

Families were provided with video cameras but no recording schedule, plan or protocol. This was to ensure that any videoing done in the home or community was parent-driven. This also helped ensure videoing was not intrusive, and captured every day 'moments' the parent saw as worthy of inclusion in the study. A template was established by the researcher to log the videos after they were taken make notes (see Appendix F).

3.8.4.2 Video Diary Implementation

Families were provided with a video camera and memory card when they completed the first survey and interview during Phase 1. Times were made for data collection. Families were encouraged to keep video diaries throughout the whole study (12 to 18 months). This could include music in the home, around the home, in the community, including their MELP, community and school concerts, or whatever the family felt was worthy of capturing.

3.8.4.3 Video Diary Analysis

Video diaries were collected at least every six months. Dropbox access was made available for all families. I devised a data record sheet to record the number of videos taken, and to code each recording, as well as the observations made for analysis. These included whether the music was being made live, listened or watched (DVD) alone or with another family member, whether the music came from the MELP, how the child interacted with the music and with the people in the video, including if they sang, danced, played instruments, laughed, smiled, moved to the music or other. The way music was used in the home in the video diaries was examined in comparison with the way music was used in the MELP. These were then analysed and reconstructed into stories in the narrative case studies, as described in Section 3.5.7

3.8.5 Weekly diary

Weekly diaries provided a space for research participants to record events that occurred throughout the week, which they felt might be pertinent to the research study in a time-flexible way. A 'day in the life' research has used diary entries to document events that have occurred in the course of a day, captured in moments (Tudge, 2008). This form of data collection can be onerous to parents,

however, whereas a weekly diary provides more flexibility in documenting a routine and then adding exceptional cases to this, things that have occurred in addition of the normal weekly routine.

3.8.5.1 Weekly Diary Design

A week at a glance diary was used (Barrett 2009, 2011, 2012a) to capture musical events, the people present at these events, where they occurred, and the child's emotional state or mood at the time. Parents were provided with a space for each day to make these recordings (see Appendix G).

3.8.5.2 Weekly Diary Implementation

Parents were provided with the diary at commencement of the study in Phase 1. Some parents chose to continue using these forms throughout the study (Phases 2 and 3) while others chose to keep their weekly diary entries on an excel spreadsheet or notes on their phone. Parents decided how often they would make diary entries and how detailed the account would be. The advantage of this was parents controlled their level of recording, making it easier for them to use in their day-to-day schedules. While diary maintenance was inconsistent between different families, the technique provided a snapshot in time for each of the participating families.

3.8.3.3 Weekly Diary Analysis

Weekly diary notes were collected at the end of Phase 1, Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the study. They were analysed using narrative enquiry and incorporated into the narrative case studies (See Chapters 4 to 8). Similar to the video diary analysis, I read through the diaries looking for, and recording the number of diary entries that related to music making that was live, listened or watched (DVD), alone or with another family member, and whether the music came from the MELP. I also looked to see if the parent described the activity as singing, dancing, playing instruments, and the emotions associated with this – happy, content, upset, or behaviours that describe emotions such as laughter, smiles, moving to the music or other. These diary entries were compared to the way music was used in the MELP and collated with the other data for analysis and integration into the case studies as per outlined in Section 3.6

3.8.6 Field notes

Field notes are descriptive notes kept by the researcher while they are working in the field of study. They usually include in-depth notes on the people involved in the study, the environment in which the study is taking place, as well as reflections on and patterns observed in the data (Brodsky, 2008). These field notes form the "content and quality control that shape multiple qualitative data points into articulated, meaningful, and integrated research findings" (Brodsky, 2008, p.341). For

the current study I kept field notes on visits to MELPs as well as visits to family homes to conduct interviews, and field notes and analytic memos (Saldana, 2013) on data analysis, and thoughts and reflections around patterns observed.

3.9 Data integration to construct a narrative case study

Data analysis in qualitative research generally requires the researcher to immerse themselves "in the data, looking for patterns, themes, and relationships" (Kenny, 2005a, p.66). The purpose of this is to reveal to others what has been learned and discovered through the research and presented with fresh insight (Saldana, Leavy & Beretvas, 2011). I immersed myself in data generated from interviews, observations, diary notes and videos, surveys and field notes, and wove these together to make meaning of the ways in which parents invest and use music, and how this shapes the ways they use music in their everyday lives. These were presented as narrative accounts in the form of five narrative case studies.

The steps towards this final stage of storytelling were many. Ultimately I was looking to make meaning by seeking what was significant in these parents' co-created stories. Research grows out of "the repeated asking of questions concerning meaning and significance" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.132), so the data analysis began with me using the research questions to guide and identify any emerging themes that helped me make meaning of the reasons why parents enrolled in a MELP, what they hoped to gain through attendance, and how attendance shaped their use of music in the home.

Emergent themes are "a basic building block of inductive approaches to qualitative social science research" (Williams, 2008). Themes emerge from the close analysis of the raw data (Williams, 2008) and allow the researcher to focus on eliciting, analysing and co-constructing stories. There was a large volume of data, and long interviews also meant there was a great richness and depth to the data as well. To help manage the data, and immerse myself in people's stories and identify emerging themes, I used the following stages of analysis.

3.9.1 Stage 1

3.9.1.1 Interviews

Audio recordings of the interviews were listened to the same day as the interview and twice more within the next three days.

3.9.1.2 Field notes

Field notes were taken immediately after each interview so I could retain a snapshot of the parent's musical experiences, musical identities and family demographics while listening to and reading through their transcripts.

3.9.1.3 Transcripts

Audio files were sent away as quickly as possible for transcription, and these were read three times in the week following their return. During this initial stage of reading transcripts, margin notes were made in direct response to research questions of this study. These margin notes were used to identify small stories that illustrated a theme. I included relevant information from the survey in the margin notes as well, such as a person's musical heritage and their response to survey questions about their personal use of music in the home.

3.9.2 Stage 2

3.9.2.1 Transcripts coded

Transcripts were re-read a further three times several weeks after the interviews were conducted, and colour-coded into three broad areas that reflected the research questions: reasons why they attended, their hopes, and what they took from the program into the home. Each of these areas was further interrogated from the perspective of the parent's musical heritage and musical identity.

3.9.2.2 Video and diary cataloguing

During Stage 2, data began to arrive in the form of videos and weekly diary entries, approximately three to six months after the commencement survey and initial interview were conducted. These were watched or read, notes made on the kind of musical moment recorded and if it was connected to the MELP. They were then all transferred to a data sheet, catalogued and numbered.

3.9.3 Stage 3

3.9.3.1 Diary notes

Weekly diary notes were searched for key words to see how music was being used at home. This included live music, recorded music, dancing, playing instruments, attending MELPs and other music outings.

3.9.3.2 Video diary notes

Video diaries were also catalogued and notes kept on each describing the kind of musical interaction observed, whether it was live or recorded music; singing, dancing or instrument playing (or a mix of all); who was involved in the music experience recorded; where the recording was made; and any emotional status expressed in the video – happiness, sadness, settling down, upset to calm, waking up to excited.

3.9.3.3. Second interviews

Second interviews were conducted, recorded and listened to a minimum of three times in the days immediately following the interviews. During these second interviews, families were invited to review any of the video diaries with me. If they did we would make notes together on their observations and my interpretations.

3.9.3.4 Transcripts

Second interviews were transcribed and read a further three times. Margin notes were used to start to tie together any themes from the first to the second interviews, and from any of the video and diary notes that were now available.

3.9.3.5 MELP Observation 1

MELP observations were made and notes kept in the moment. These notes were then coded for the kinds of activities conducted and the way the child interacted with the parent, facilitator, others, and the music.

3.9.4 Stage 4

3.9.4.1 Video and diary integration

Stage 4 analyses were the point at which the MELP observations and the home video and diary notes were cross-referenced to find cross over from activities in the MELP to activities at home. This included noting any songs, games, instruments that had been played that week at the MELP, CDs or class resources, dress ups or anything else observed at the MELP (or described by the parent in the interview or diary notes as having occurred at the MELP) and witnessed in the home. Any videos that had been analysed prior to this point of the study (Stage 3.6.3.2) were reviewed again and MELP music, games or activities noted.

3.9.4.2 Interviews

At this point in the study, themes around beliefs, identity and hopes were emerging and were therefore further investigated. The survey and interviews were revisited to study family music histories and beliefs and to look for patterns that could tie into these emerging themes. The way that MELP attendance shaped parents' music use at home was scrutinised for strategies and structures for each family.

3.9.5 Stage 5

3.9.5.1 MELP Observation 2

MELP Observations were made and notes made in the moment, coded and analysed as per Stages 3 and 4 outlined above.

3.9.5.2 Third Interviews

Third interviews were conducted with families. These were recorded and listened to as outlined in Stages 3 and 4 above. During these final interviews, families were invited to review any new video diaries with me and also reflect on their experience of being a part of the study.

3.9.5.3 Transcripts

Third interviews were transcribed and read a further three times and margin notes kept as outlined in Stages 3 and 4 above.

3.9.5.4 Narrative Analysis

Each piece of data generated was an action, event or happening in the musical life of each of the families. These were captured, documented and analysed as outlined above. The aim of this analysis was to pull together the threads and create a storied account for each family in the study. Thus Stage 5 of the analysis focused on configuring and synthesising all of the data in order to craft a narrative account for each family.

At the heart of narrative analysis is "the ways humans experience their world" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p.2). Writing a story allows the act of writing, a process that is both "dynamic and creative" (L.Richardson & St Pierre, 2005, p.960) to be used as a method of inquiry. During this stage of data analysis families were invited to review the narrative case studies to ensure their accuracy in the context of the lived experience of the research participant. In some cases a fourth interview was scheduled to clarify any questions that I had, or that the family had about the case studies written in narrative form.

3.9.6 Stage 6

3.9.6.1 Analysis of narrative

Paradigmatic analysis techniques were used as a method to uncover any commonalities and consistencies that existed across the five individual case studies. These were analysed to identify emerging themes across the narratives that were then interpreted to specific themes and subthemes in response to Research Questions 1 and 2; and MELP content and structures that were strategically used by parents in the home in response to Research Question 3.

3.10 Evaluating Qualitative Research

"To the qualitative researcher integrity is everything" (Cavana et al., 2001, p.135). Qualitative research conducted within a constructivist paradigm is evaluated differently to that conducted within a positivist framework (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Authenticity, credibility and trustworthiness; coupled with reflexive practice, triangulation and member checking provide a thorough framework for evaluating this longitudinal qualitative research study (Barrett & Mills, 2009).

3.10.1 Authenticity, credibility and trustworthiness

These criteria were addressed in the current study by generating data through a variety of methods (survey, interview, observation, diary and video diary) and across a number of contexts. Using multi-sites (contexts) in a research study allows the reader to apply the results of a study to a greater range of situations (Merriam, 1998). For the current study, families were recruited from three different MELPs, each in a different geographic location. The five narrative case studies were written involving families from the three different geographic sites, and the beliefs and perspective of these parents were studied from several perspectives, including their musical heritage, musical values, and belief systems.

The trustworthiness of findings in narrative inquiry is evaluated according to its ability to resonate, to tell a story that is respectful, responsible, rigorous and resilient (Stauffer & Barrett, 2009). The rigour of this methodology is not measured by precision or generalisability of the data, but rather on "transparency, accountability, and an underpinning of ethics" (Stauffer & Barrett, 2009, pp.23-24). Respect is shown in the research through deep listening and prolonged engagement, coupled with the relational nature of the research techniques. The researcher takes responsibility for ensuring the story is told without dominating or influencing it, by always being aware of the impact their own experiences have on the way in which the data are generated, analysed and reported. Resilience is

evaluated through the narratives ability to capture the "dynamics, tension and complexities of lives lived in and through music" (Stauffer & Barrett, 2009, p.24) in ways that endure beyond the moment.

For this study, trustworthiness was demonstrated through respectful, responsible, rigorous and resilient interactions, observations, data analysis and writing practices. I listened carefully and attentively to interviews, and then read through case notes and studied videos with great care. I set up interviews that were semi-structured and carefully thought out to allow parent voices to be heard and their stories to unfold. Over the course of the study I reflected on video material and diary notes and discussed these with parents. We looked for reasons, for beliefs, for events in their lives that may have impacted on their decision to attend a MELP. We recounted personal histories and shared stories and together co-constructed a narrative account.

3.10.2 Reflexivity

Narrative research is a human and relational endeavour (Clandanin & Rosiek, 2007). Because of this, it can test the capacity of a traditional university ethical review (Dwyer, 2012). Qualitative research, by its very nature, is inextricably a personal and interpersonal process (Bruscia, 2005a, 2005b) and one that requires the researcher to maintain an awareness of their personal input, views, ideologies, influence, power and position of play (Kenny, 2005a) The researcher, therefore views and interprets the research through a lens that is comprised of their own experiences. This requires the researcher to be reflexive in their practice.

Reflexivity is the circular relationship between cause and effect and one that involves the act of self-inquiry and appraisal (Bruscia, 2005c). Self-inquiry thus requires the researcher to be aware of their perspective and base throughout the research process, and to reflect on the potential influence of this in the interpretation of the findings. The researcher can either bracket (that is, suspend any perspectives or biases they bring to the study) or acknowledge and incorporate them from self-inquiry into the research study (Bruscia, 2005c). By doing so, the researcher discloses their relationship to the research. This combination of self-inquiry and disclosure supports reflexivity (Rennie, 1995).

This thesis has demonstrated reflexive practice through the opening prelude that stated my personal background and interests in the research, and my own journey to commencing this study. This included starting a MELP business after my own child was born. This MELP, my business, has been included in this study as a recruitment site. An employee of the business was appointed as the independent gatekeeper and she provided all families with information on the study. Those who

chose to participate were unaware at the time that I was the researcher, as recruitment was undertaken by the project Chief Investigators Barret and Welch and the appointed gatekeeper. Every effort was therefore made to ensure any personal relationships with families that I may have did not impact on their choice to participate in the study. I acknowledge, as the researcher, that my personal views as a mother, music therapist, business owner and researcher all impact on my views of what a MELP should be, why families attend them and what I perceive the benefit of participating in them are. I also acknowledge the way I interview, observe and interpret the data will be influenced by my experiences in these roles.

During the two years of the study, when it seemed appropriate I shared with families my own personal experiences as a person who grew up in a musical family, and as a mother who now shared music with my own child. Through supervision, I also shared the complexities of my personal views and how these impacted on how I might present questions, hear stories, and interpret experiences. Kennelly, Ledger and Flynn (2016) reflect on the integral role of reflexivity when conducting narrative research in music therapy and the importance of supervision to ensure integrity. The reflexive practice incorporated in this study allowed me to be acutely aware of my personal views, add value to interviews through appropriate sharing, and write the case studies with greater empathy.

310.3 Triangulation

Reliability and credibility in constructivist research relies less on the ability of a study to be replicated, and thus produce "reliable" outcomes, and more on the dependability or consistency of the data collected, in order that the results make sense (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). That is, the findings are consistent with the data collected (Merriam, 1998). This is particularly pertinent when using case study in narrative research, as a single case study "is always only a composite picture of a limited part of the informants' reality, never the whole story" (Gudmundsdottir, 1996, p.294).

A number of internal strategies were built into the current study design to increase credibility, including triangulation. This is a process where multiple data sources are used to increase "rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth" of the research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p.8).

Triangulation can provide a "holistic understanding" that helps to build an understanding of the phenomena under study (Matthison, 1998). It involves the process of using multiple investigators, multiple sites, or multiple sources of data to confirm emerging findings (Merriam, 1998). In this research study, triangulation occurred through the use of multiple research sites. Three different MELP sites were used to recruit different families with different experiences into the study. Second,

triangulation occurred through the use of multiple data generation sources. This included interview, survey, observation, both live and via video footage, and field notes as outlined above.

3.10.4 Member checks

Member checking is the process of taking the data and its interpretation, back to the participants who provided the data and allowing them to check for accuracy and plausibility (Merriam, 1998). In this research study, all participants were given the option to read and check transcripts, and at each subsequent interview (Interviews 2 and 3) they were given the opportunity to ask questions and comment on the previous transcripts. After the narrative case studies were written, the families were invited to review their case study and provide feedback. Time was then set aside to conduct a fourth interview if required so that families could add details, correct any data or remove information they felt was too personal. Families were then provided with a final copy of their case study for comment. In two cases, families wanted to clarify minor details, such as timelines, when children started music for example; or clarify data interpretation. No one requested a rewrite or the removal of information.

3.10.5 Other evaluative criteria adopted in this study

3.10.5.1 Long-term observation

Over the course of the two years, multiple site visits were made to talk with families, observe children at their MELPs and also in their homes. By doing so the reliability of data collection was strengthened. This aligns with Meriam' recommendation for multiple site visits, and where possible repeated observation of the same data over an extended period of time to strengthen reliable data collection (Meriam, (1998).

3.10.5.2 Peer examination

One advantage of this study sitting within a large ARC study is that it gave me, as the researcher, access to a team of researchers working on similar data who were available for discussions and data checking. For this study, my research colleagues included two experienced supervisors, who were asked to check data collection, observations, interpretation of observations and analysis of data at regular intervals throughout the study. Colleague involvement such as this provides another way to strengthen reliability (Merriam, 1998).

3.10.5.3 Rich, thick description

A rich thick description of the item under study, in this case the family who attended a MELP, ensures enough depth is provided to readers so they can determine if the findings can be generalised

or not (Merriam, 1998). A thick description also provides protection against narrative fallacy (Flyvbjerg, 2011).

3.11 Ethics

Ethical approval was provided by the University of Queensland's Institutional Human Research Ethics Approval Committee on the 13 August 2013, approval number 2013001040. An amendment to expand the recruitment sites from two to four MELPs was approved on 16 December, 2013, as outlined in Appendix H.

3.12 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the paradigmatic frame and methodological approaches used in this study. Informed by a constructivist approach and conducted within a contextualist framework, qualitative research methods have been described that were used to gather and analyse data in order to construct and make meaning of the ways in which parents invest and utilise music to facilitate their parenting in their 'everyday' lives, and how participation in a music program shapes the way music is used in the family home and in the role of parenting.

This chapter has helped prepare the reader for the forthcoming chapters by clearly outlining the research design and methodology. The findings of the study will now be presented through narrative case studies (Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8) a cross-case study analysis and findings (Chapter 9) and the conclusion and recommendations of these findings (Chapter 10).

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS Narrative Case Study 1

Ways of being musical: a soundtrack to accompany everyday family life and improve feelings of well-being.

4.1 Introduction: What it means to be musical for Jessica's family

There is a song for everything. In two-year old Jessica's world, where she lives with her mother, father and five year old sister Nora, music is a normal part of every day. "It's everywhere," says Jessica's mother, Renee. "It's kind of like the subtle soundtrack to your life" (Mother, Interview 1, 23 February, 2014). In particular, this family sings. "(We) sing for everything – sing to get their attention, sing to get them to tidy up. There's a song for everything" (Mother, Interview 1). Parents Renee and Sean are comfortable using music, and in particular song, in their everyday parenting. They identify as musical even though they say they are not good at music. Renee studied music in high school and sang in the choir as well as learned the piano as a young child. Even so, she states: "I wasn't that good at it (but) it was something that interested me" (Mother, Interview 1). In regards to her husband she says: "He's very comfortable using music. He couldn't sing a note in tune if you paid him a hundred million dollars but he loves all types of music" (Mother, Interview 2, 8 September, 2014). To them being musical is expressed in their love and appreciation of music and the value they place on music. It is shown through the ways they use it to support and nurture their family time together, and the ways in which they weave it into their everyday parenting and everyday lives. This case study explores this concept of musicality, and how it is used in this family to support family unity, function and well-being.

Singing together is what this family does. Song accompanies this family from the moment they wake, to the moment they go to sleep and it is used for play, for ritual, to transition throughout the day, help regulate and soothe emotions in difficult situations and make mundane tasks fun. They make up their own songs and use known songs to accompany rituals, such as bed time; to accompany daily activities, such as bath times; to accompany chores, such as cleaning up toys; and to accompany car trips, something that Jessica does not like at all. Renee sings these songs unaccompanied and along with CDs. Consequently, there is a large collection of children's CDs in the car, including favourites by Justine Clarke and Playschool and nursery rhymes. During morning meal times and chores music is usually on in the background, either via the internet-based radio station Pandora or the iPad. Technology plays an important supportive role with a large collection of children's songs stored on the iPad and the iPod.

4.2 Music and everyday lives: a typical day for Jessica.

Jessica is a quiet and reserved two-year-old who lets her big sister Nora do the talking and the singing for her. Jessica doesn't talk or sing much herself, but it is evident in the diary notes and conversations with her mother, that she loves being sung to. Her family use this to communicate, engage and play with Jessica and also to calm her. Renee voiced concerns about Jessica's expressive language skills at the beginning of the study. Her first-born Nora had been an early talker, and it concerned her that Jessica did not speak very much at the age of two.

Jessica's week is divided between days at home with her mother and Nora, where they play, do their chores, and attend a weekly music group; and days at childcare while Renee works. At night song books and cuddles are often shared with her father and mother, and on weekends, her father is prominent in the diaries attending and singing at swimming lessons, and playing with the instruments or singing with the children at home. Renee comments that Sean is more involved in the "structured time" with the girls. He likes to "do" activities with music more so than use music freely in their play. So he will get out the instruments and play with the children, sing songs, or read songbooks at night (Mother, Interview 4, 8 May, 2015).

For Jessica, each day starts with a song that Nora has made up. Nora goes to Jessica's room and sings the song to her. "She combines songs and we get a lot of songs from *The Little Mermaid* and *Disney Princess Movie*. Even Jessica joins in with that and the neighbours all know about it, so it lofts through their windows as well" (Mother, Interview 1). After morning made up songs and breakfast, if the girls are staying home with mum, they will often go to their large tub of musical toys that includes "shakers and a drum and a tambourine and all that kind of stuff" (Mother, Interview 1) and make music or sing songs they know from traditional repertoire, *Playschool* or songs they have learnt at their Music Early Learning Program (MELP) or childcare. For example, in one of the video diaries Nora is prominent singing *Old MacDonald* while Jessica smiles and plays along with a little farm of animals the girls have put together on the play mat. Jessica bops up and down to the music and eats her biscuit while Nora sings loudly, clearly and melodically (Video Diary 1, March, 2014). Musical play at home is a common occurrence, documented at least daily in the home diary notes. In video diary 10 (May, 2014) Jessica and Nora are seen dancing to the song *Sleepy Bunnies*, a song that is sung at their MELP. Nora joins in the singing and directs the dance, and Jessica joins in 'hopping' up and down like a bunny. Another example of this is discussed during the first interview (February 2014) when Nora sings Jessica's favourite song into the researcher's voice recorder. The song *Tommy Tim Turtle* is a song that Nora learnt at childcare and then taught to Jessica. Nora also taught it to her cousins who were visiting recently from Ireland.

The family has been using this song if Jessica is really upset to stop her from crying. “We’ve seen that she stops crying,” Renee reports “and so now we substitute, instead of Tommy Tim the turtle, in the song we put Jessica’s name in and everyone’s names in it. She likes that” (Mother, Interview 1). When asked what element of the song Jessica responds to, Renee feels it is the “nice steady beat” (Mother, Interview 1). Music is also used a lot at the swim school that Jessica goes to. In a video diary (Video diary 2, March, 2014) Sean is singing to Jessica in the bath “wash the dirty Jessie, wash the dirty Jessie” to the tune of *Farmer in the Dell*. When asked about this song Renee said that they learnt this song at swimming lessons and use it at home in the bath. Renee is observed later using song as a learning tool to help Jessica learn about her body parts. In this video (Video Diary 22, August, 2014) Renee is observed singing the adapted version of *Farmer in the Dell* as Jessica follows the instructions and washes the body parts that her mother sings.

Songs are used to transition from home play to chores, including the preparation and execution of the weekly grocery shop. In shopping centres, Nora will break into song and Jessica will bop or dance along (Mother, Interview 1). Once home again, songs are used to accompany afternoon cleaning up routines, in particular the “tidy up” song from their MELP, bath time (as described earlier) and bed time. “When they were babies and my husband would be rocking them, they’d love it if he hummed something. The deep vibrations, they’d fall asleep to that” (Mother, Interview 1). Even though the girls are no longer babies, Renee and Sean still sing to them at bedtime every night after books. It is the “last thing we have to do” Renee says, with a smile (Mother, Interview 1). In Video Diary 13 (2014) Jessica is being rocked to sleep by her mother, who is singing *I Can Sing a Rainbow* to her. The weekly diary notes show almost daily entries where the day ended with “goodnight song and cuddles” with “Daddy” or “myself” at home, and Jessica’s emotional state reported as “calm and tired” (Diary entry, 13 March 2014).

Singing at bedtime is not only a family ritual, it is also a tool that Renee and Sean use to help calm and soothe their youngest child, who has experienced some sleep issues this year. Jessica’s second winter was a bad winter, plagued with flu and colds that disrupted sleep and made her quite miserable. This can be seen in the written diary with entries that describe Jessica when she is very sick and upset (for example, dairy entry 11 July, 12 July, 13 July 2014) and record Renee “singing and cuddles during the night”. “(She) had a nightmare last year with being sick” (Mother, Interview 3, 23 February, 2015). “She’s been waking every night – six, seven, 20 times a night and really distressed. She’s still asleep and if you sing to her it stops her crying every single time… It soothes her” (Mother, Interview 2). Jessica was at the doctor every week for about five months, and every night “she couldn’t breathe because she was clogged up. And you’d just get her upright and sing

and she'd just relax into you. It soothes her, if she's upset it settles her, and I like that" (Mother, Interview 3).

Using music to soothe and comfort Jessica is a musical parenting strategy that Renee has incorporated well in her everyday parenting and routines. She uses it in many settings, not just when Jessica is sick. Three days a week Renee works as a social worker, and this means two things for Jessica that she doesn't like: the first is the 45 minutes car ride to and from work; and the second is child care. Jessica is not a fan of the car. The only thing that makes a car ride bearable for her is "music and singing….otherwise she'll cry the whole car journey" (Mother Interview 1). Even though Jessica became more tolerant of car rides as she got older, she still struggled with being "tired by the end of the day and she's cranky and she will start to whine. We all start singing and do(ing) the actions. I'm driving but Nora's in the back seat" (Mother, Interview 2). In a video diary (Video Diary 5, April 2014) Renee can be heard singing from the front seat and Nora can be heard singing in the back seat while Jessica is happily doing the actions to the song *Open Shut Them*. She is smiling and there is no sign of distress evident at being in the car journeying home after a long day at childcare. Weekly diary notes document how Renee and Nora sing nursery songs to appease an "upset" Jessica in the car (Diary entry 24 February), singing "anything we could" to calm a "very upset and cranky" Jessica (Diary notes 19 March, 2014) and "singing made up songs" for the same reasons (Diary notes 21 March, 2014).

Renee also uses music to transition Jessica into the childcare centre once they arrive. "We use music sometimes because Jessica hates day care; I think it's probably a good way of saying it. It took six months (and) three weeks before I could drop her off and pick her up when she wasn't crying and screaming and trying to climb up me…I'll sit down and sing with her and play something with the carers as well. They try and engage her so we can try and transition me to leave the room. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't" (Mother, Interview 2). Diary notes regularly state that Jessica was "upset" at childcare drop off and Renee sang and played with toy instruments as a way of distracting and redirecting her (Diary entry 26 February, 2014). The staff at the centre have commented to Renee how much Jessica enjoys music and responds to it. They are glad to have a tool to use that has helped her settle in. And now that she is settled at childcare she enjoys the musical play time provided by the childcare staff. "It took a long time, eight months for her to be happy and enjoy it and not just lie there and glare at everybody all day, which is what she used to do" Renee says. "They've always got instruments and things and they sing and they always say as soon as they start to sing Jess comes running to sit down at the front like she's always really engaged in it" (Mother, Interview 3).

Staff at the day care centre describe Jessica as "the one who sits back and watches everything that goes on" (Mother, Interview 1). So they were initially surprised to see Jess "come alive when the music comes on" Renee said (Mother, Interview 4). Staff enquired with Renee if this was normal, did she always respond to music like this? And Renee told them that she "goes to music on a Tuesday and has been since birth" (Mother, Interview 4). Since then, staff have used music effectively to engage and interact with her throughout the day. The teacher sings more, including Jessica's favourite songs: *Galump Went The Little Green Frog* and *Baa Baa Black Sheep*, and leads group dances to other favourite songs like *Five Cheeky Monkeys*. The children also 'play' music with their teacher sometimes. On these occasions she lays out a range of musical instruments, mostly shakers and sometimes also drums and the children can pick what they want to play. The children sit on a mat for this music time and sing songs (as reported by Mother, Interview 4).

4.3 Jessica's Music Early Learning Program: A description of her participation

Jessica attends a MELP with her mother each Tuesday during school terms (10 week blocks, four times a year) and has been doing this since before she was born. Each week Renee and Jessica join the friends they have made at music, to sit in a circle format on the floor on their 'mat' and join in a range of musical games and activities. This begins with a hello song that Renee sings along to enthusiastically (MELP Observation 1, June 2014; MELP Observation 2, November 2014) and Jessica enjoys, evident through her eye contact with the music therapist, smile and her big hello wave (MELP Observation 1 and 2). The structure of the weekly group was similar during both observations with different songs and activities included within this structure. For example, during the first observation visit the children sang action songs with the music therapist after the hello song, before participating in a group dance. This included *Open Shut Them, The Bee Hive, Galump* and *Heads and Shoulders.* During the second observation visit they participated in a tickle song, *Incy Wincy Spider, Galump* again, before dancing to a requested Wiggles song, doing actions to *Hush a Bye Bear* and completing body part identification in *Heads and Shoulders* again. Some songs were repeated and new repertoire was also introduced, with new actions and concepts to follow.

During these sessions, Jessica was observed to participate in a number of ways. She first watched the music therapist and observed the other children in the early parts of the session before participating in active hand-over hand facilitation provided by Renee in action songs and dancing. She then chose and played a range of instruments on her own. During the instrument section the children, including Jessica, played a range of musical instruments together, and thus worked through a range of developmentally driven activities. This includes games on the drums that

explored a number of concepts. During these tasks music early learning was also reinforced by setting drumming beats, patterns and paces that the children played along with. Physical skills such as bi-lateral hand control, eye hand coordination and crossing the midline were also practised during instrument activities.

Throughout the sessions observed, Jessica stayed close to her mother. Renee feels that Jessica's favourite part of the sessions is the action songs and these are her favourite songs to do at home as well. During the two observation sessions Jessica was observed watching the music therapist and the other children intently as they did the actions, more so than doing actions herself. Her participation was facilitated throughout by her mother. In the home video diaries however, it is a different story altogether, one that shows Jessica independently doing the actions to her favourite songs in a variety of settings, including in the car (Video Diary 5, April 2014; Video Diary 14 and 15, June 2015), the bath (Video Diary 11, May 2014), on the change table (Video Diary 6 and 7, April 2014; Video Diary 27, September 2014), at play time at home (Video Diary 18, 19 and 20, July 2014; Video Diary 29 and 31, February 2015) reading books (Video Diary 25, August, 2014; Video Diary 33 and 34, February 2015), and at the local library (Video Diary 28, September 2014).

The MELP is conducted in an environment that reiterates social skills and encourages regulation. For example during the first observation session (June 2014) the children played together in a social environment, on a large gathering drum to the song *Walking Through the Jungle*. The children were directed to play along with the group facilitator and "stop, look and listen" for the animal sound. They waited, with great anticipation, for the group facilitator to make an animal sound, thus practising self-regulation and concept comprehension, and then attended to the task of identifying the particular animal on the drum. The children identified the animal (the Remo drum used had a jungle animal print on the side including cartoon pictures of lions, monkeys, snakes, crocodiles and birds set in a jungle scene) and played "fast or slow" or "loud or soft" depending on the size and speed of the animal. During the second observation session the children played along to two songs: *Can You Shake Along With Me,* and *Shake Your Bell,* where they followed cues to "stop" and "start". Again, the children were observed concentrating and working very hard to control their impulses to play constantly, following the cues and anticipating when the game will "start" again. Jessica followed along to each of these instructions, stopping and starting on cue. The group facilitator added layers of complexity by introducing concepts that related to speed and volume. A sensory motor planning task was also added by directing where the shakers should be played (up high, down low, above, under) in relation to the child's body.

During the second observation session Jessica displayed greater independence throughout, even approaching a large gathering drum to play with the other children on her own (Observation 2). She banged the drum once and quickly returned to her mother. Renee seemed very happy with her effort and praised her for playing on her own. The session moved to a group activity that included movement with the therapy balls, before transitioning to a quiet activity that focused on family together time and regulation. Jessica remained physically close to her mother throughout these sections, and appeared to enjoy the closeness of being held on the ball, or in her mother's lap while books were read, rainbows were made or cuddles shared. The MELP was one time in the week that Jessica had alone with her mother. Nora was present only for the first 15 minutes of the session before she left to participate in a ballet class in the next room, thus leaving Jessica and her mother to share a special musical time together.

4.4 Why Jessica attends a Music Early Learning Program: reasons parents provide for attendance at a MELP

4.4.1 MELP attendance to combat social isolation

When asked the reasons why she attended a MELP Renee's initial reason was personal. "It was more of a social thing at first," Renee said. "I started with my eldest daughter, Nora, when she was only six months old. We had moved back to [city] from overseas to look after my Mum who had been sick with Dementia, I was going through a pretty tough time and was a bit socially isolated with not having lived [here] for about 12 or 13 years…(Mother, Interview 1). Renee's mother was 57-years-old when she was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. Renee returned home from overseas to care for her, and found most of her old friends had moved away. With her days spent caring for her mother or her young baby, she didn't have time to meet new people. "My step-mum suggested I should get out and start doing some social activity instead of just focusing on my Mum being unwell and being at home with a young baby, so we ended up joining MELP 1… Now I am on to child number two - a second generation" (Mother, Interview 1). Renee has made many friends of her own through the music group and friends for the children. "(I've) made some very good friends through music and all of us have had several kids now…It's been a really positive experience for us" (Mother, Interview 2).

4.4.2 MELP Attendance in recognition of positive musical memories and high family values for music

While it was a need to get out of the house and meet people that first motivated Renee to look into an activity for her child, it was her love of music and what she saw in its value for children that led her to choose music over another kind of activity. "Music is a really good way of connecting with

your child and doing something fun," she said (Mother, Interview 1). Renee believes this for herself and her children based on the experiences she had as a child, as she has happy memories of connecting through music with her own mother, who was very musical. In particular Renee has fond memories of her mother singing to her when she was a child. "She had a beautiful voice," Renee said. "Mum was always singing and dad's singing and that's just what I really remember when I was growing up" (Mother, Interview 1). Renee specifically remembers her mother singing the Rainbow song to her at bedtime. Now, Renee sings this song to her children as part of their family bedtime ritual. This generational ritual is the "last thing we have to do… and that's what my mum used to (do); come in and tuck me in and give me a kiss and sing me the Rainbow song" (Mother, Interview 1). Every night Nora gets to pick what song she wants, and for the last year she has chosen *I Can Sing a Rainbow,* referred to as *The Rainbow Song*, that Renee's mother used to sing to her. At the end of the study, Renee reflects how Jessica now chooses her own songs too. At the beginning of the study Renee chose the songs that she sang to Jessica each night. Now that Jessica is older she chooses her own, and she chooses to sit in the rocking chair and sing through a medley of the same songs each night. This old rocking chair is the same one Renee used to sit in with her mother as a child, now she and Jessica sit together each night and sing *Baa Baa Black Sheep* with sign language, *I Can Sing a Rainbow*, *Row Your Boat* (after all, they are in a rocking chair), and finally the *Goodbye Song*. This is the same song from their MELP and everyone in the family is sung goodbye to – her mother, father and Nora, and her grandmother in Ireland, the cousins from Ireland, all the toys, the dog and finally her doll, Bubba.

4.4.3 MELP attendance to support child development

During the first interview Renee described Nora as the singer and Jessica as the watcher. She described how Nora always sings, while Jessica loves to do the actions to songs. Renee speculated that Jessica's reluctance to sing may be because she didn't have the "language structures" yet to participate in the singing (Mother, Interview 1). During the second interview, Renee voiced concerns about Jessica's speech development. When asked her thoughts on how Jessica might feel about Nora often leading the musical playtime as seen in many video diaries, Renee said, "she's used to Nora being in control" (Mother, Interview 2)". Renee said "she just sings the first word of a song she wants" (Mother, Interview 2) and Nora sings the rest for her. "If she wants to sing a song she'll say the only two words for songs she can say. (They) are 'Row Row' for *Row Your Boat* and 'Baa Baa' for *Baa Baa Black Sheep*. If she wants to sing those songs then she'll come up and say those words to me" (Mother, Interview 2). This can also be seen in the video diaries. Jessica will indicate through gesture and sometimes words she would like her mother to sing it again. Jessica's language development is the main reason Renee believes she loves action songs so much, "because

her words just aren't there yet. It's all about the doing" (Mother, Interview 2). It is also evident in the video diaries Nora, as the older sibling, and the one who is a confident and musical singer, has the potential to play a prominent and influential role in terms of Jessica's musical engagement. Renee agrees, stating while she is the person most responsible for overseeing Jessica's musical experiences, Nora is not far behind. While she feels she is the most influential in terms of musical engagement, she believes it is a "close tie for Nora!" (Mother, Interview 2). She goes on to say, "We're probably on a par, but Nora and I, because we are always together, because she will never leave my side to play by herself. As I've explained to you before, (Nora) is very musical. So she is singing all the time, then I usually sing as well. Then just to get Jessie to do things, often we sing to her because that focuses her attention and stops her from being a cranky toddler" (Mother, Interview 2). Examples of this are prominent in the early videos (Video Diary 1, March 2014; Video Diary 4 and 7, April 2014; Video Diary 9, 10 and 11, May 2014) where Nora is singing to or for Jessica and Jessica either bops along, or does actions to the songs. However, there is a shift towards the latter half of the year, and a change is evident in the way Jessica is playing musically. Jessica is seen engaging in musical activities on her own, such as playing a newly acquired drum kit, and very importantly, she is starting to sing songs herself, and these first songs sung by Jessica on her own are songs from her MELP.

At the start of the third interview, Renee greeted me at the door clearly excited with the news that Jessica has started singing on her own! "Her speech was really slow compared with Nora's so I was really worried but then all of a sudden she had this little language explosion in December/January… Come February, she started singing songs from MELP 1, particularly the *Hello Song* because they're the words she has. And it's really cute; really cute, it makes me really happy" (Mother, Interview 3). Jessica can be seen in the video diary sitting at the table singing to herself and taking turns to sing hello to the whole family, including her mother, father, Nora and Bubba (Video Diary 32 and 35, February 2015). Renee feels that Jessica's exposure to many songs through MELP attendance has supported her language development (Mother, Interview 4). She feels the words started to develop before Jess began singing more, but without the singing and exposure to song her words may not have developed as well.

Jessica's musical day often begins with singing hello to Bubba in the morning, when she gets her out of her crib and singing goodnight to her at the end of the day. Now Nora is at school, Jessica spends more musical play time on her own. She has developed a liking for the drum kit kept upstairs (Video Diary 26, August 2014), and video diary entries show her playing the drums independently, as well as singing her favourite action songs to Bubba (Video Diary 33 and 35, February 2015). She also incorporates some of the sign language the children learned at their MELP

group when singing her favourite songs like *Baa Baa Black Sheep*. This is evident in the Video Diaries 29 and 33 (February 2015) where Jessica clearly signs 'master' 'dame' and 'boy', as well as singing key words.

4.5 Reflections on attending a MELP: The influence it has had on music at home, everyday life and parenting

Over the past year Jessica's mother, Renee has kept a total of 35 video diaries and submitted 364 written diary entries, recording Jessica's daily interactions with music in the home, with the family and on her own and in the community. Family routines and rituals have been documented and the prominent role of music observed. Jessica's mother has participated in four interviews, one of these post-study when she reviewed this case study; and I observed Renee and Jessica at two MELP sessions on two separate occasions. It is clear from these data that music is prominent in the home, in this family's day-to-day life, and Jessica and Nora benefit from musical parenting. It is difficult to distinguish at times between music in the home and music at the MELP as the songs and ideas from the MELP are interwoven into the fabric of their everyday routines and lives so well.

Over the year of study, Jessica became a more active participant in music making. With Nora now at school, Jessica has taken up the morning ritual of singing, although she has altered the routine slightly and instead of inventing her own song like Nora did she sings the MELP *Hello Song* to her Bubba. At the end of the day, Jessica puts her Bubba to bed in the crib and sings her a song, patting her gently on the back, just the way her mother does to her, and her mother's mother did to her before that. There is a beautiful symmetry in this ritual. Renee reflects on this point: "Sometimes if we put (Jessica) up to bed and she's not ready to go to sleep we can hear her singing to herself and making little songs and patting the baby; it's really sweet; sweet to see - I know how to do this, I know how to make my baby happy" (Mother, Interview 3). Reflecting over the interviews and discussions we have had, Renee recalled her earliest and happiest memory of her own mother was that of her singing to her at bedtime and patting her on the back. Renee adds to this family ritual of using music to soothe. "I used to sing to mum when she was unwell (in the late stages of her Alzheimer's). I used to sing to her and she'd be quiet then because she was really sick and upset a lot of the time with her Dementia and that would calm her as well…so yeah, it's lovely. Music is lovely" (Mother, Interview 3).

Jessica also appears more confident to participate musically in activities outside of the home one year on from the start of the study. During the second observations at the MELP, Jessica was seen to participate in actions, dance and instrumental play more independently. Recently, Jessica's family has started attending the church associated with Nora's new school where Jessica is exposed

to a new outlet for music. Her favourite thing to do is join in and sing in church, even though she doesn't know the words. "She's having a go and she loves it," Renee said (Mother, Interview 3). She particularly likes it when the choir sings and she always gives them a clap which makes everybody laugh" (Mother, Interview 3).

Renee said attending a MELP "definitely" shaped the way she uses music at home (Mother, Interview 3). "My repertoire is huge compared to what it would have been," she says (Mother, Interview 2). While Renee said she would use music at home anyway (Mother, Interview 2), she incorporates the songs learned, the content from her MELP into home play, and she integrates some of the program structures into her musical parenting strategies too. This can be seen in both the video and written diaries, where songs learned at the MELP are used in the home in a seamless way, and strategies such as using music to tidy up, transition between activities and manage emotions and behaviour are identifiable. Structures from the MELP are used by Renee to support her daughters' growth and development. In particular she seems to use music to help soothe and regulate Jessica's emotions and to help her sleep. Attendance at the MELP and the support this has offered to her to use music in the home has provided Renee with practical ways to engage and encourage Jessica's speech and language development.

4.6 The plan from here: Jessica's musical future

I asked Renee what plans she had for the children in regards to music, and she intends to do much the same (Mother, Interview 2 and Interview 3). She plans to continue attending the MELP with Jessica and ballet with Nora. Perhaps a choir for Nora is on the cards too, if only they could find the time on the weekend. She plans to sing and dance at home, to make up songs, listen to music in the car and sing to her children every night after books, before bed. She hopes her work commitments won't restrict their opportunities to do this, as that is the only thing she can identify that impacts on their time as a family to make music together.

Renee's hopes for the future are that her daughters' learn an instrument. "Probably piano… or drums" (Mother, Interview 3). "I would like them to learn an instrument, even if they don't continue forever" (Mother, Interview 3).

Renee will continue to use music to enrich her own mental health as well. She said the way she uses music at this stage of her life is less structured and more informal than it used to be, but she still uses it often to affect her mood. Renee's job involves a lot of driving, and she uses this time to listen to her own music. "I just love it. I bring my own CDs and then I get to play my own music in the car… The main thing I do is just listen to my own music and go for a walk and have my

headphones in" (Mother, Interview 1). She says she will continue to use music to bring her family together. "It's just a normal part of our lives… we do songs with books every night, we do cuddles and songs with music every night, we do music in the car and every day all of those things happen." (Mother, Interview 3).

Music provides a thread for Renee to the past and allows her to weave happy memories and rituals into her present day life with her own children. She is honouring and passing on the ritual that her own mother began, by singing at bedtime each night. "It's a nice way to remember her," she says (Mother, Interview 1). It would seem her children will grow up with this memory also, if Jessica's nightly ritual of singing to her Bubba is any indication. Music makes Renee happy. Seeing her children making music and singing makes Renee happy. She reflects many times throughout the interviews how watching her children play and sing musically and interacting with them musically makes her happy (Mother, Interview 3). Musical ability does not define musicality in this family. Renee states in closing the final interview of the year-long study: "It is good to know we are a musical family" she says. "We might not have much skill or talent but it (music) is there and I like that it's there" (Mother, Interview 3).

4.7 Commentary to the narrative case study and conclusion

For this family, attendance at a MELP has enhanced how parents integrate music into their everyday parenting. It is used to support family structure and unity; to play and learn together; to communicate and interact with each other; and to support early development. Attendance at a MELP has also reassured them that even though they don't feel they are 'good at music', or proficient musicians, they are musical parents. Attendance at a MELP has subtly shaped the way the family uses music in the home, particularly in regards to the children's repertoire, and using children's songs and singing to encourage developmental skills and regulatory behaviours. Renee has taken from the MELP and woven into her everyday routine content and structures that she uses strategically to enhance her musical parenting and support the health and wellbeing of her family.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS Narrative Case Study 2

Making music together to grow and learn: Musical engagement through live music and technology.

5.1 Introduction: What it means to be musical for Joseph's family

"Everything's got music with it with us," says Sarah, mother of two year old Joseph. Music accompanies key moments of Joseph's day; in particular it accompanies his learning. "When we're teaching him stuff, we always seem to teach him with music" (Mother, Interview 1, February, 2014). This family uses made up songs to accompany their daily activities, help Joseph learn and understand his environment and master new skills. They also use music technology to support this. Sarah reflects on how when Joseph was a baby whenever she "did anything", she would make up a song and sing through the activity, for example "I'm putting a nappy on. I've just always done that, my family has always done that. So I never thought it was not normal" (Mother, Interview 1). Sarah remembers her mother making up songs and singing to her as a child, and she says her grandmother did the same thing with her mother when she was a child. "That's why I do it," she said. "I think I just do it naturally as well" (Mother, Interview 1). The family tradition of making up songs continues. Now, in addition to Sarah making up songs, when she visits her grandmother they sing the songs she made up to her great-grandson. "So we've got songs passed down through the generations," says Sarah (Mother, Interview 1).

Despite this creative music making that occurs each day in Joseph's life, neither of his parents identifies themselves as particularly musical. Sarah never learnt an instrument and neither did her husband. She says "we don't play (an instrument). My husband and I aren't musically talented at all." (Mother, Interview 1). Music did not play a "massive role" in her memories of growing up. She didn't study music at school because she felt she wasn't "talented enough" (Mother, Interview 1) and studying privately, despite a great interest, wasn't an option. "We couldn't afford to do it, so we just never really thought about it, but when you actually sit and think about it, like when you're asking me these questions, yeah, it probably was every day that we did something (musical) without realising" (Mother, Interview 1). Her husband's family felt that "boys sort of don't do music. You know, you should play cricket" (Mother, Interview 1).

Sarah did sing in the school choir but she was "too shy to sing [solo] and I was very conscious of the fact that I couldn't sing" (Mother, Interview 1). Most of all she loved the musicals, but never went for the big roles because of her belief that she "couldn't sing" (Mother, Interview 1). Music was important to Sarah's mother's family growing up. "When my mum was growing up and she

was still in Scotland at the time, I know their family, because they were very poor, music was everything. So they would have on the weekends where the whole family would get together and they'd play the accordion and sing and they'd do those kinds of things. And I know when we had family get togethers (sic) when we were growing up, not so much now, it was similar… we would sit around the camp fire or something and we'd sing songs, but no one actually played any instruments" (Mother, Interview 1).

Nowadays, Sarah uses technology to make music more so than singing at large family gatherings. Technology plays an important role in Joseph's musical interactions. This, and the way this family makes up songs to help their son learn new information, is explored further in this case study. Attendance at a MELP, and the way this is used to support this family's everyday musical interactions and parenting is also explored.

5.2 Music and everyday lives: a typical day for Joseph.

Every part of a typical day involves music for Joseph. He has been interested in music "from the moment he was born… I could tell" says Sarah (Mother, Interview 1). "When I was pregnant and there'd be certain songs on the radio, he would be kicking in my stomach and people would think that was funny! And I was like: I wonder if those stories are true about, you know, you play certain music" (Mother, Interview 1). Nowadays, Joseph starts the day singing songs with mum. "Every single day, we still do our usual [routine]. Some mornings, we might wake up and he just wants to lie in bed and we do our favourite nursery rhymes, or when we brush our teeth, we do the *Brush the Teeth* song, but even when we're cooking, we just make songs up" (Mother, Interview 2). This can be seen in the diary notes throughout the study. Most days start with a morning cuddle (Diary Entry 26 February, 2014; 5 March, 2014; 13 March; 2014) followed by instrument play time (Diary Entry 25 February, 2014; 7 March, 2014; 12 May, 2014; 31 August, 2014; 11 January, 2015; 22 February, 2015) or watching music DVDs or children's programs on TV (Diary Entry 25 February, 2014; 11 March, 2014; 1 April, 2014; 8 May, 2014; 22 Sept, 2014; 24 October, 2014; 28 December, 2014; 18 January, 2015). Sarah noted in her diary on 18 March Joseph "woke up and wanted to play his instruments" so the day started with made up songs and instrument playing. Every day activities are also accompanied by songs, from teeth brushing (Diary Entry, 24 February, 2014, regular entries of this event across the year) to nappy changing (Diary Entry, 25 February, 2014; 11 March, 2014); getting dressed in the morning (Diary Entry 25 February, 2014; Diary Entry 11 March, 204) and bathing (Diary Entry, 6 March, 2014 and regular entries for the year). Bed time rituals of story time and bedtime songs are also accompanied by song and music (Diary Entry 24 February, 2014; 4 March, 2014; regular entries for the year).

As Joseph grows his routines change, but the use of music to accompany them does not. For example, during toilet training Sarah used made up songs to help Joseph learn "potty training" (Diary Entry 13 March, 2014). During toilet training Joseph had some health issues which affected his potty training regime, so Sarah made up her own songs to encourage him to go to the toilet. "We've made them silly and funny, so it has helped" (Mother, Interview 3). As he got older he transitioned from singing songs in the morning to watching them on television. These are usually music videos that Sarah plays for him on YouTube, that "he points to on the television and he'll say a certain song" (Mother, Interview 1). Sarah said in the first interview that she is trying to break this habit and revert back to more music making, so she has adapted the morning routine to include live music making with the large collection of instruments they have at home. "I've got the house set up in certain ways. So down at the end of our sunroom, there's a music area (Interview 1, 2014)". "He's got a box where he's got his maracas and his little drums and recorder, harmonica and all the kind of stuff" (Mother, Interview 1). He also has his own "little guitar" – a ukulele that goes everywhere with him. "The guitar is always out…you're not allowed to put it away" (Mother, Interview 1). These musical play times in the morning involve singing and dancing mostly, and are prevalent in the home diaries (Diary Entry 28 February, 2014; 8 May, 2014; 11 July, 2014). "If he had his way, the music videos would be on all day and he would be playing with the instruments and I would have to sing and dance as well" (Mother, Interview 1). After morning play time, if Sarah and Joseph are staying at home, music is used to teach and learn as they go about their day.

Music will accompany gardening (Diary Entry 2 March, 2014; 30 March, 2014) and cooking (Diary Entry 24 April, 2014; 2 February, 2015), and learning opportunities are built into both. So is technology, something Sarah uses to support music time in the home and learning through music. "We have a gardening song because he loves gardening," Sarah said. She has found a television show *Boogie Beebies* that "teaches kids how to do things like grow a plant or something and it's all dance and music… so he'll go out in the garden and he'll (sing) 'Digging a hole'" (Mother, Interview 1). When they return inside, walking up the stairs provides an opportunity to learn counting to a made up song. "I'm teaching him how to count and so we walk up and down the stairs and I'll just do a tune with it or I'll sit there [singing in an ascending and then descending tonal pattern] '1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1' and I'm finding that's made it better for him, easier for him to learn how to count" (Mother, Interview 1; Diary Entry 25 February, 2014; 4 March, 2014). Sarah noted in the diary on 24 March, 2014 Joseph "can now count to 12 unassisted!" when walking up the stairs and singing their made up counting song. Once upstairs, they may continue learning and play through music while cooking or preparing lunch. One day while cooking together, Joe was pulling out pots and pans and as he did this they were making noises, Sarah says he said "Oh Mum, that

sounds like a song we know, listen to this," and he repeated the banging rhythm and hummed the tune for Sarah to guess (Diary Entry 2 February, 2015; 20 February, 2015; Mother, Interview 3). Cooking and guessing songs became the activity and they played a guessing game together for a while. Each time he would play the rhythm, hum and tune and Sarah would have to guess the song. Joseph thought told his mum that making up sounds that became songs was "really cool," (Mother, Interview 3). Singing and made up songs also accompany daily chores. "So if I'm doing a chore or something, I'll say you know do the class song [singing] 'This is the way we wash the floor' and he'll get the mop and (mop)," (Mother, Interview 1; Diary Entry 14 March, 2014).

When Joseph's father comes home from work, the musical interactions continue. Joseph and his father 'jam' together on the drums and on their guitars (Video Diary 5, 6, 23, 24, 25, 35; Diary Entry 12 June, 2015), and the whole family participates in a music group that Joseph sets up and leads. "Every day we do a jam session," Sarah says. "So he'll actually go and tell us when it's ready. He'll go and get his guitar and he'll bring me some sort of instrument and he'll bring my husband an instrument and we just have to play" (Mother, Interview 1). Sarah says she feels music gives her husband and son a meaningful way to be together. "I notice my husband is becoming a lot more involved too and I think he spends a lot more time with Joe and the actual musical instruments than I do" she says (Mother, Interview 3, 23 February, 2015).

The day draws to a close with a bath that is accompanied by singing and made up songs (Diary Entry 24 February, 2014; 7 March, 2014; 22 May, 2014), dinner and some quiet music with an app on the iPad before bed (Diary Entry, 9 April, 2014; 16 May, 2014; 23 October, 2014; Video Diary 27, 28, 29, and 30). At bed time Sarah repeats the ritual from her own childhood of singing to Joseph and having some cuddles. "I just always remember mum singing to us and every night we would have singing before we went to sleep, singing and a story or a combination of both and we all just cuddled up in bed," she said (Mother, Interview 1). Now at night, Sarah and her husband sing to Joseph and to his cousins when they have sleep overs. "My husband joins in, and when our little nephews and nieces come over, we all sing. I'm the crazy aunty that sings and dances, but they all love it" (Mother, Interview 1; Diary Entry 5 September, 2014; 1 November, 2014).

Joseph spends one day a week with his grandmother and three days a week at childcare while Sarah works as a creative designer. Joseph and his grandmother spend a good portion of their day also making up songs and playing together musically. Sarah's mother grew up in a family that loved music, and she has taught Joseph many of the songs she sang as a child in her native home of Scotland (Diary Entry 19 January, 2015), as well as making up their own songs to accompany their activities and games. Sarah explains "when my mum comes over, he'll dance and sing with her and

they're in the garden and everything" (Mother, Interview 1). These made up songs often reflect Sarah's Scottish heritage. His mother and grandmother sing with a Scottish accent and use Scottish lingo, so now Joseph says 'bairn' for 'baby' in their made up songs, and in nursery rhymes like *Wee Willy Winkie* (Mother, Interview 1).

When Joseph attends childcare he interacts musically with the environment and the children. This has been observed by the teachers who noted that he would pick up toys and play them like a guitar. They asked Sarah "does he play music at home because we've realised that when he's here he'll pick up a toy and strum it like a guitar" (Mother, Interview 1). When staff bring out instruments, not only does Joe already know how to play maracas or shakers "he's been trying to teach the others kids how to do it" (Mother, Interview 1). "I've said to them that he does a music class" (Mother, Interview 1). Recently, Joe's teacher left a note in the communication book for Sarah telling her how that day "Joe and two of his little friends went and actually found musical instruments and they sat down and they were all playing in time to the music" (Mother, Interview 2). Sarah believes this would have been in a similar style to his MELP class. Joe's class also learned songs and performed them at the Christmas concert. This included singing *Jingle Bells* in Japanese. Sarah was surprised because she didn't realise Joseph had been singing in Japanese at home, until she heard the concert performance. "He would come home and sing Jingle Bells in English and then he would sing it again and I thought he was just singing in baby talk…and it wasn't until we went to the concert that we realised he was actually singing it to us in Japanese because that's what they'd been learning" (Mother, Interview 3).

Once a month on weekends the family goes to a market where they help Sarah's brother Trevor run his own stall selling second-hand goods. Trevor has an acquired brain injury and Sarah is his legal guardian. This stall is one of the things he is able to do independently. There is always music at the market, and both Trevor and Joseph love music, so Sarah sees this as something really special they can share together. On other weekends they will seek out festivals that involve live music (Diary Entry 6 April, 2014; 26 May, 2014; 18 July, 2014; 6 October, 2014; 9 November, 2014). For example, one weekend they went to a medieval festival where there was a "little Celtic band playing and he'd never seen the instruments before and he was just silent" (Mother, Interview 2; Diary Entry 12 July, 2014). Sarah believes at these times Joe is silent because he is "watching and learning" (Mother, Interview 2). She goes on to explain "when he is intrigued with something and seeing it for the first time he's really quiet, and he just takes it all in, and then by the second or the third time…he gets in to it and he starts clapping and he'll sing or he'll understand what they're doing and try and join in" (Mother, Interview 2).

Weekend time is also spent visiting family, where Joe plays with his cousins, usually through music, and watches music with them. “When we go to (a) family’s place and they’ve got their Foxtel music channel on, he’ll …grab the guitar (and play along)” (Mother, Interview 3). This can be seen in the Video Diary 31 where Joe is watching ACDC on the TV at his uncle’s house and copying the guitar playing and dance moves. Swimming lessons also occur on weekends. Joseph did not like swimming at first and Sarah said he cried and refused to get in the pool until they started singing then Joe was more confident and happy. Since then his swimming has improved (Diary Entry 17 March, 2014; 20 September, 2014).

To get to these events the family travels in the car where the Wiggles often dominate the soundtrack. “(He’s) obsessed with the Wiggles, absolutely obsessed with all the Wiggles songs. He knows all the dance moves, he knows all the songs. So we have those CDs in the car that we play constantly” (Mother, Interview 1). Sometimes they will also play musical games in the car, like guessing the tune sung, hummed or presented by Joseph to his parents in funny ways, such as through bubble blowing or tongue rolling. These fill time on long car journeys (Mother, Interview 3). No matter what they listen to in the car, or where they travel, the guitar always comes too. The one time they forgot the guitar, Joseph found another one to play. “He went to a little birthday party last month and all morning he was practising singing Happy Birthday,” Sarah said. At the time the song was sung Joe was in the toilet and missed it – he was “really, really upset”. After this he went and found a little guitar that belonged to the birthday girl, brought it outside, and “started strumming it and sang her the entire song in front of everybody and everybody stopped and watched, and then the kids cheered him on, which he absolutely loved” (Mother, Interview 2). Joseph was just over 2 years old at the time. According to Sarah, every month, Joe makes someone’s birthday a special treat to remember by serenading them with his solo rendition of *Happy Birthday* accompanied live on the guitar (Diary Entry 31 May, 2014; 29 June, 2014; 16 August, 2014; 13 September, 2014; 18 October, 2014).

Over the course of the yearlong study, the car music began to change to modern music. On one occasion, Sarah wrote in her diary “Toddler Tantrum!!!! We pulled up in the driveway at home and Joe unexpectedly started screaming and crying and we couldn't figure out why. Eventually I realised it was because we'd turned the car off and therefore the song that was playing was also turned off. He had to listen to the entire song before he would get out and go inside the house. The song was by Prodigy” (Diary Entry, 30 October, 2014). Joseph’s change in music taste coincided with more time spent on the iPad and access to new song material. Sarah explained his music taste changed around six months into the study, when he was 2½-years- old and he now “likes the modern stuff”. He would hear a lot of this, including Katy Perry, Sheppard, Freestyler, and Pharrel Williams on the car

radio and then look them up on YouTube later, or watch his parent's DVD collection when he was home. He particularly enjoyed watching Blur, Kiss (Video Diary 8), and Jeff Buckley (Video Diary 36), imitating how they played their instruments and how they danced (Mother, Interview 3).

5.3 Joseph's Music Early Learning Program: a description of his participation

Sarah and Joseph spend one day a week at home together: Monday and this is the day they attend a MELP. Both Joseph and Sarah love the class. "Oh it's great," Sarah said (Mother, Interview 1). "Joe gets really excited. He doesn't like being away from me he gets separation anxiety. When I drop him off at kindy, he cries and everything, but with Clara's class, he loves it. You know, because he knows it's going to be fun and he loves the fact that he can go and play the musical instruments and dance around and there's other kids his age" (Mother, Interview 1). Sarah too really enjoys the classes. "I love it. I absolutely love it," She said, laughing (Mother, Interview 1). Joe has been attending this MELP since he was seven months old.

Sarah and Joseph were observed at their MELP on two occasions. Both times, they joined other families sitting on the floor in a circle formation and began music time by singing *Welcome To Music*. Sarah sang enthusiastically while clapping along, smiling and watching Joe, who stood in the middle of the group and danced to the music (MELP observation 1, June 2014; MELP observation 2, November 2014). There was some similarity observed in the structure of the two sessions observed. However the order of activities did change and the types of activities were slightly different. For example, during the first observation visit the children joined in a group dance before participating in body part and movement songs with the group facilitator immediately after the welcome song. This included the *Rocket Song*, which Joe enjoyed very much (MELP Observation 1) evident by him positioning himself next to the group leader ready for the count down, and jumping into the air laughing when the rocket 'blasts off'. Another indication of his enjoyment was that he asked the group facilitator to do it again and then again. After this, the children participated in *Heads and Shoulders Knees and Toes* and Joe was once more a keen participant (MELP Observation 1) doing all the actions and body part identification on his own without prompting. This was followed by a group activity where a ball was passed around the circle and stopped when the music stopped. Joe went back to his mother for the first time all session and sat on her knee for this activity. Afterwards, he stood again and moved to the centre of the group for more dancing songs, specifically *Happy And You Know It* and the *Hokey Pokey*. Joseph joined his mother for the second song and they danced together, laughing and singing the whole time. This was followed by a walking game where the parents and children walked together in a circle until the music stopped. Everyone would stop, pause and wait for the music to start again.

During the second observation visit the session began with the *Welcome to Music* song and then moved quickly to instrument playing. The children were invited to come to the centre of the circle and given an instrument to play. Joe was given a caterpillar. He required some guidance from the group leader on how to play it, but played it with great interest, exploring the different sounds it could make for the next three songs: *The More We Get Together, I Am The Music Man, and Shake Your Bells* (MELP Observation 2). Instruments were packed up and large therapy balls handed out to every second child. The parents were instructed the children were going to pretend they were "bopping up and down on the ocean" (MELP Observation 2). Half the group bounced for one verse then the children swapped. Joe enjoyed this activity, bouncing himself around on the ball and smiling back to his mother, who was sitting in the circle around the outside of the children. When it was not his turn to be on the ball Joseph was happy to sit in his mother's lap and bounce up and down with her (MELP Observation 2). Joseph participated actively and independently throughout the observed MELP sessions. This is in contrast to how he interacts in other groups, according to Sarah. She described him as "clingy" during the first interview and explained he doesn't like to leave her normally (Mother, Interview 1). In both sessions observed, Joseph left Sarah regularly to stand in the middle of the group to dance and sing. During the first session the children each chose an action song from a song board. When the group leader brought out the song board, Joseph ran straight to the front of the class and said "Joe's turn" three times (MELP Observation 1). He was given the board and chose *Peter Rabbit,* where he sang key words and did the actions without prompting. Throughout this activity he stayed at the front of the group and sang along to a range of action songs. Sarah stayed seated in the circle watching and supporting him through eye contact and occasional verbal reinforcements, such as "good job, Joe" and "go on, you can pick one" or "you can do it". (MELP Observation 1). He happily returned to her lap for the dancing songs that required him to lie down or sit on her lap so she could provide movement as part of the activity. These songs included *Fuzzy The Clown*, *Humpty Dumpty* and *Wheels On The Bus* (MELP Observation 1).

Sarah believes Joseph's favourite part of the music class is the drums (Mother, Interview 3). Drumming activities were observed during the first visit (MELP Observation 1). Joe took a drum from the group facilitator and returned to sit in Sarah's lap and play. The drumming songs began with *This Is The Way We Play* (the drums), and Joseph alternated between hitting the drum with his mallet and mouthing the mallet. Each time he mouthed it his mother would redirect him to play the drum with the mallet (MELP Observation 1). Sarah changed the pace of her playing to match Joseph's as they played together on the drum. The next song was a stop and go song. Each time the group leader said "stop" Sarah would exaggerate the action of stopping and Joe would laugh and

stop, and wait with great anticipation for the start. However, Joseph seemed to lose interest in the activity after the first three verses leaving the group and standing on the outside watching the other children and looking out a large glass door. Sarah went to him and redirected him back to the group. She held the drum and he hit it, again playing and laughing together until the end of the activity.

At both MELP sessions Joseph was observed to participate well in a parachute activity and enjoy the quiet time this activity provided at the end of the session. All of the parents held onto the edges of a large parachute and lifted it up and down in the time to the music, with the children laying underneath it and watching the colours rising and falling (MELP Observation 1, MELP Observation 2). After the parachute, Joseph returned to his mother and sat in her lap for a quiet cuddle song. They gently rocked together. Sarah was observed to hum along to some of the songs. At both groups the song *It's So Nice To Have A Cuddle* was sung.

When asked what it is in the class that he most responds to, Sarah said it was the "vibrancy of the whole thing. Everybody is happy…It's the whole getting all excited and let's make as much noise and be silly and, you know, the dancing. And he feels quite proud of himself when he learns something new from it." (Mother, Interview 1).

5.3.1 What happens after the MELP

After music, Joseph often goes home and Sarah believes he practises the songs. She said about their class last term "he was one of the babies and we had more of the older kids. So he would watch them and try to do what they did. He may not necessarily do it in the class, but he would come home and then he would practise. I could actually see him practising." When his father came home from work he would try and sing a song to him, doing the actions and becoming very excited (Video Diary 32; Diary Entry 17 November, 2014). He also enjoyed playing the drums with his father at home in what Sarah refers to as their "jam sessions" (Diary Entry 11 January, 2015; Video Diary 25).

Over the course of the yearlong study, Sarah's work days changed which meant they could not attend their usual MELP for two terms. During these two terms Sarah reported that they both missed music so much she was actively trying to change her work schedule so they could return (Mother, Interview 2, 4 September, 2014). Joseph had also been asking Sarah if they could go to music saying "music? Music dance?" (Mother, Interview 2). Sarah said while they were not attending the MELP she took him to a free music class at the local health centre that was held on her day off, but "he didn't like it" (Mother, Interview 2). She reported he became very shy and did not interact the way he would at his MELP. Sarah said there were too many children, it was too

noisy and the music was not child-centred. “There would be 50 kids. It was ridiculous and it was so noisy and loud, and they just put a CD on, and then they had a teacher up the front, and she’d dance and sing, and the kids would copy, and every now and then they’d pull out a little star for *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*, but they only got it for that particular song, and it was only once” (Mother, Interview 2). Sarah goes on to explain that there was time to dance in the first half of the session and some instrument playing in the second half of the session “but it was just maracas and the shakers and that was it. Again, they only got it for really one song, so they didn’t really sit there and learn about it, and the song wasn’t really matched to the instrument…” (Mother, Interview 2). So instead, Sarah decided to stay home with Joseph “and bring all his musical stuff out and do it at home with me” (Mother, Interview 2). Or “he’d get the iPad and find his own songs” (Mother, Interview 2). During these two terms off, Sarah arranged a couple of casual classes with her MELP and noticed again how much Joseph loved it (Diary Entry 10 November, 2014) so she rearranged her work schedule in order to return to the MELP the following term (Mother, Interview 3).

5.4 Why Joseph attends a Music Early Learning Program: reasons parents provide for attendance at a MELP

5.4.1 MELP attendance to nurture an interest and love in music

From the moment Joseph was born he showed a keen interest in music. “Whenever there was a song on television he would turn and he would smile and laugh,” Sarah said (Mother, Interview 1). Even though he was a baby he would be “moving and he was responding to it and making noises” (Mother, Interview 2). “I have these videos of him when he’s five or six months (old) and he’s standing at these little music tables that you can get and he was playing and he was doing this (movement up and down) like he was a DJ. He was like he was a DJ going ‘yeah’ and he was mixing it up and doing all the different keyboards and the drum bit” (Mother, Interview 1). This was the impetus for Sarah to enrol him in a music class. “I just kept watching him for a couple of months and I was just fascinated going ‘Is that normal? Do all kids do that?’ and you know, I knew kids were always singing and dancing, but he just seemed that little bit more than the other kids...and then I was like ‘I wonder if there’s such a thing for music (groups)’. At the time my brother was doing music therapy and I thought ‘well I wonder if there’s something for babies’ because you hear all these stories about, you know, when they’re in the womb, music is really important. So I just went researching and that’s how I found Clara” (Mother, Interview 1). “As soon as I found out there was a music program, I enrolled him. He was seven months at the time and he just was fascinated with the teacher’s guitar” (Mother, Interview 1). If she could have, Sarah would have enrolled him in music earlier. “I actually would’ve if I’d known about her earlier; I would have started him straight away because the moment that he was born he was interested in music”

(Mother, Interview 1). Joseph loves going to his MELP, and so does Sarah. "I have the best fun. I think I'm probably louder than the kids," she said (Mother, Interview 1). For Sarah the most important thing is to have fun. "I just want it to be a fun experience," she said (Mother, Interview 1). "If that means he learns new things and new skills out of it, then that's a bonus" (Mother, Interview 1).

5.4.2 MELP Attendance to support learning through music

Sarah has found ways to weave music into Joe's daily learning opportunities. She believes, from personal experience, that music helps support early childhood development, therefore she uses it on a daily basis (Mother, Interview 1, Mother, Interview 2; Mother, Interview 3). She gave many examples of this for her own son as well as for her nieces and nephews. For example, she talks of times Joseph's cousins come for sleepovers, and she and her husband sing songs to them at night. The next day when they go home their parents say to her that their children are doing songs and actions they didn't know, and things like "count to three where they couldn't do that before" (Mother, Interview 1). Sarah uses everyday encounters like walking up and down the stairs to teach Joe counting to a made up song (Diary Entry 5 March, 2014). She also teaches him about animals (Diary Entry, 3 April, 2014) letters (Diary Entry 21 July) and colours (Diary Entry 25 July, 2014) through singing both invented and traditional songs, and using the iPad for phonics programs (Video Diary 30).

While the video and interview data show an organic use of music to support learning, Sarah also plans how she can incorporate it to support learning new skills. "As he's getting older, I would try and find ways to help him learn how to read and write. I don't know if it can help in any way….Again, art and music – I've always thought that that's helped kids learn things a little bit easier" (Mother, Interview 1). Sarah believes over the course of the year-long study Joseph's vocabulary and memory have improved, and she believes a lot of this is due to music. "That's from singing songs over time, over and over again and that helps with memory," she said (Mother, Interview 3, 23 February 2015). She also said music has supported him learning his alphabet and counting up to 10 (Mother, Interview 3).

Sarah has incorporated technology into her daily routine to support her efforts to teach Joseph through music. For the two terms that Sarah and Joseph were not able to attend their MELP Sarah used the iPad to help fill in the gap. Joseph particularly liked going to the iPad and picking his own songs to perform to. This included his old favourites and also new songs he could seek out himself. "He'll sing the songs, like *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*, the favourites….he'll sing it and do the actions and then we had to cheer and say how brilliant he was" (Mother, Interview 2)". But new

repertoire began to appear "because he's changed, he's not really into the nursery rhymes as much anymore" (Mother, Interview 2). The iPad is being used to support learning. "Now with the iPad, because he's learning numbers and the alphabet and the colours and all that kind of thing, he himself has found on YouTube all the phonics" (Mother, Interview 2; Video Diary 27, 28, 29 and 30). This use of technology seems to have also altered the way that Joseph interacts with music and with his mother. He likes to use the iPad on his own and sing the songs independently. Sarah said "he really likes (the iPad) at the moment, the songs, and learning the alphabet, and another song that he really likes is the *Rainbow Song*, so red and yellow…and that's one of the ones that he's been doing on his own" (Mother, Interview 2). Sarah has set up certain apps Joseph can use to search for songs on his own. She also has apps like Smule, which are social music-making applications designed for iOS and Android phones, which allow him to interact and make music on the iPad. "It is actually a piano or a guitar and you hit the keyboard…or strum the strings" (Mother, Interview 3). At night she often gives Joseph the iPad and he looks up *The Number Ones* on YouTube. These are short clips that go for about half an hour and play regular nursery songs, alphabet and counting songs. Joseph goes through and picks out the ones he wants to watch.

5.4.3 MELP attendance to support family time together

While the iPad has become more prominent in the home as Joseph gets older, live music continues to serve an important role in this family for together time. Sarah and Joseph still sing together each day and make up their own songs and when Jospeh's father comes home from work, it's another opportunity to make music. Sarah said "in the evenings when his father comes home from work and we've had our dinner, we have our bath time, and it's the hour before he goes to bed, because he's been so addicted to the iPad and television, and it's too much. So we're like: 'Let's play', so he'll actually go again and he chooses the toys that we're playing with in the evening, and some days, it'll just be music, so he'll go and pull out the drums, he'll pull out the guitar, he'll give us an instrument to play, and then we've got to sit. We're all a band, and he's dancing and he's really into it and he's counting us in" (Mother Interview 2). This evening music time at home often reflects the MELP sessions, with Joseph using the songs from his group as well as the popular songs he is exposed to through his parent's musical preferences and through YouTube. Joseph is the group leader and his parents are the participants in his music group.

Joseph loves to spend time with his cousins, and this time is often spent playing musical games. Joseph often teaches them songs from his MELP. "So when the cousins come to visit, if he's got his little instruments out, and they're looking at it and they don't really know, he'll show them how to do it," Sarah said (Mother, Interview 2). Family get-togethers often include either live music and

performances from the children, or music in the background or on television that the children dance to, including both popular music like *Geronimo* (Video Diary 34) and children's music like *Frozen* (Video Diary 33).

Music provides a way for Joseph to spend meaningful time with his uncle. In one video diary (Video Diary 15), Joseph and his uncle Trevor dance together at a market. They are holding hands and swaying gently back and forth in time to the music. Sarah showed me this video during the second interview, and I commented on how beautiful this was. Sarah paused before she said, "My mum had tears in her eyes when she saw that" (Mother, Interview 2). She explained her brother's brain injury and epilepsy can lead to him being aggressive and running away each day, so many people have 'negative reactions' to his behaviour. She said music, and the way Joseph and Trevor can share music together shows how sweet her brother is. "And how he just adores Joseph and Joseph loves him too. Joe's obviously not scared of him at all, and it's just really positive for both of them" (Mother, Interview 2). Joseph spent many hours rehearsing *Happy Birthday* to sing to his uncle last year, and he sang this proudly, with his guitar accompaniment for the family (Video Diary 40).

5.5 Reflections on attending a MELP: the influence it has had on everyday life and parenting

Over the past year Joseph's mother, Sarah, has kept 41 videos and 126 diary entries, all recording his daily interactions with music both within the family, with technology and with his music early learning facilitator. In doing this Sarah has captured and documented the way Joseph interacts with music in the community at his music group, childcare, festivals and with his family and friends both at home and at events, including birthday parties. Sarah has participated in three interviews with me and I have observed them at two MELP sessions on two different occasions.

Over the course of the year, the way Joseph used and engaged with music changed with the introduction of technology. At the start of the study Joseph was observed watching music DVDs and dancing to them, and he has also started to use interactive music apps on the iPad independently. Sarah has ensured family music-making time has not stopped during this transition by insisting the family have their "jam" time together most evenings when Joseph's father gets home from work. Technology provides support to this family for using music in the home in an educational way. For two terms (half the year) Joseph didn't attend his MELP and Sarah used the iPad and DVDs to keep a presence of music in the home. She also encouraged Joseph to run his own MELP sessions with his friends and his cousins at home.

Music plays a role in supporting family routines and rituals; in particular it accompanies daily activities like teeth brushing, dressing, bathing, and bed time. Again, technology has become a part of this nightly ritual with quiet time spent looking up songs before bedtime (Video Diary 27 and 28). Joseph looks these up independently, with Sarah nearby if he needs help. Sarah feels attending a MELP has shaped the way she uses music at home, and supported her to set up musical routines and rituals such as these. "I would just do things on my own, naturally. Then it was really good going to (MELP) classes because I was like, 'that's good. I'm doing sort of what she's doing, anyway', and then she sort of gave a few tips on other things" (Mother, Interview 2). Sarah felt reassured she used music effectively in her parenting (Mother, Interview 2), and it gave her new ideas on other ways she could incorporate music into their everyday lives. Sarah comments she learned "new things" from attending a MELP including using music to calm (Mother, Interview 1) and manage emotions. "He's started the tantrum stage and there'll be times where he'll just go 'got my cranky pants on' and then he'll sing 'I am cranky' or he'll change words in songs or he'll just make songs up just to let me know. And so we'll have a silly song and then we'll go 'now we're happy'" (Mother, Interview 3). "The music does make us less stressed," she said (Mother, Interview 3). Sarah supports this statement further by saying MELP attendance had a positive influence on Joe's behaviour and musical interactions with others (Mother, Interview 3) as he now uses music as a way to interact with other children, playing 'bands' and instruments with children on play dates and at childcare (Video Diary 41).

Sarah believes Joseph is a very musical child who has a lot of fun with and through music, and this is one of the main reasons she enrolled him in a MELP. She believes his attendance has nurtured his musicality. "We've had people at Joe's kindy, parents come up and asking the teachers to ask us about Joe's music because they want to enrol their kids because they've heard that Joe's done it" (Mother, Interview 3). Sarah believes that music is a vital tool for parents, one that "makes parenting more enjoyable, especially if you've had a bad day at work" (Mother, Interview 3).

5.6 The plan from here: Joseph's musical future

When asked what her future plans for Joseph and music are, Sarah said she planned to do "the same, because I think we're doing lots as it is" (Mother, Interview 1). She is interested in enrolling him in the future in instrumental lessons and she has started enquiring to see if there is a best age to start. Sarah reported he will probably learn the guitar but she is adamant that this will only happen if he continues to love music. Music has to stay "fun and there's no pressure, because I always picture…well I remember my friends when they were having to do music lessons and they loved it at first, but when it actually became a chore…but I don't want him, as a child, to be pressuring him

to do something that's going to stress him out" (Mother, Interview 1). At the time of the final interview (February 2015) Sarah felt that Joseph was ready for more than the MELP but he was not yet ready to begin classes, so she was investigating what other options there were (Mother, Interview 3).

Sarah will continue to use music at home to assist teaching Joseph new things. Recently she has been teaching him how to draw a face and while they draw the eyes and mouth she sings "this is the way we draw the mouth" and he understands and then draws the detail on the picture (Mother, Interview 3).

5.7 Commentary to the narrative case study and conclusion

For this family, attendance at a MELP has provided reassurance they are using music well in their everyday parenting, and it has provided new ways for incorporating music to help manage emotions, behaviour and early learning. It has also reassured them that even though they don't identify themselves as musically talented, they are musical parents. Attendance has actively shaped the way the family uses music in the home, particularly in regards to confidence to make up songs, use music to support learning, incorporate children's repertoire into daily activities, and support the development of regulatory behaviours. Sarah has used the content and structures from her MELP to strategically reinforce her musical parenting and support the health and wellbeing of her family.

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS Narrative Case Study 3

The musical threads that tie a family together across distance and diagnosis.

6.1 Introduction: What it means to be musical for Natalie's family.

Musical moments accompanied each moment of each day for three year old Natalie over this family's year-long participation in the study. "At least every day there's always something musical going on, whether we're singing to get ready, washing her hands, 'wash, wash, wash your hands' or 'brush, brush, brush your teeth' all those sorts of things" Natalie's mother, Karen said. Music provided opportunities to nurture family time together and support Natalie to learn and grow. This is despite neither of Natalie's parents identifying as 'musical', or having strong memories of music being a part of their own childhood. Rather, it seemed to arise from both parents belief in the value of music to help their daughter feel safe, calm and secure, and its power to engage her and help her learn and grow. Natalie has a rare chromosomal disorder, Mosaic Trisomy 9 that has resulted in her experiencing a range of developmental delays.

Natalie's parents, John and Karen, grew up in New Zealand in areas which did not have much in the way of formal music learning. Karen grew up in a remote part of the South Island, where they could not get radio reception. Karen learnt the flute through a school program, as her mother did before her. John sang with the church choir. To them, being musical is not about an ability to play an instrument, it is about intention. John said, "(When you think about it) you don't really need to be in a band or play an instrument to be musical. You just need to enjoy listening to it I guess (Father, Interview 1, 14 April, 2014)". Their daughter Natalie enjoys listening to music each day. She particularly likes to listen to songs sung to her by her parents, or played on a CD or radio, while her parents dance with her. For this family, being musical is about making music, listening to music and moving to music together.

6.2 Music and everyday lives: a typical day for Natalie.

A typical day for Natalie starts and ends with a song. In the morning, when Karen greets her daughter she sings her a good morning song, and they sing to get ready for the day (Diary Entry 17 April, 2014; 21 April, 2014; 3 May, 2105; 11 June, 2014; 25 June, 2014; 13 August, 2014; 2 September, 2014; 9 September, 2014; 24 September, 2014; 3 October, 2014; 7 October, 2014; 15 October, 2014; 5 January, 2015; 31 January, 2015; 1 February 2015). John works away from home every other week, and in these weeks Karen and Natalie keep busy singing songs, singing song books and dancing around together. Each part of the day is accompanied by a song describing what they are doing or will be doing soon and play time is filled with music activities and musical toys. If

they have appointments to attend, singing often accompanies that too, as is further discussed in Section 6.3.2. On weekends when John is at work, they have a "usual Saturday morning routine" where they "wander off to the mall, go and have a coffee and then wander the shops that are playing the music and have a bop around to the songs" (Mother, Interview 2).

Most afternoons Natalie and Karen have a dance session to the radio or a favourite CD (Diary Entry 15 April, 2014; 20 April, 2014; then at least weekly records in the diaries). Karen wrote in her diary "always (at) about 4pm she starts looking to the stereo, dragging me there bouncing, wanting music, we usually do it around this time of day" (Diary Entry, 7 June, 2014). After dancing comes bath time, also accompanied by song and Natalie prepares for her nursery rhyme time ritual with her Dad.

Every night before bedtime, John and Natalie sing their favourite nursery rhymes together (Diary Entry 18 April, 2014; weekly entries for the duration of the study). These include *Humpty Dumpty*, *Twinkle Little Star* and *Incy Wincy Spider* (Mother, Interview 1). John phones home when he is away for work, and Natalie will look out for the phone at dinner time with great anticipation. When it rings she smiles and when he answers and sings she joins in and sing along with him (Diary entry 22 April, 2014; 25 April, 2014; 4 May, 2014; 6 May, 2014; 11 May, 2014; 10 June, 2014; 24 June, 2014; 5 July, 2014; 6 July, 2014) Dairy entry 25 April, 2014). Karen says "you can hear her, he's doing like *Humpty Dumpty*, you know [sings melody] in the background and lifts her fingers in the air to songs like *Twinkle*, she knows, she gets her hands up. She's not quite coordinated but you can see the hand up" (Mother, Interview 1). Karen laughs and adds "half of his workmates join in; quite often we get the whole choir!" (Mother, Interview 1). "They know it's nursery rhyme time and they all sing in the background" (Mother, Interview 2). Karen also finds if Natalie is upset or tired at the end of the day, John singing into the phone helps to calm her (Diary Entry 2 August, 2014).

6.3 Music as a means to strengthen daily experiences and relationships

Karen and Natalie incorporate music each day into their lives, whether they are staying at home, attending appointments, when John is away for work and when he is home. They use music as a means to build, strengthen, support and nurture their relationships and learnings as outlined below.

6.3.1 Music as a means to maintain and strengthen relationships

The weeks when John is away for work he and Natalie stay connected and share their ritual of song singing. Both John and Karen report this as a highlight of their day (Mother, Interview 1) and all three of them look forward to it. When John is home he sings in person each night.

Karen and John also use music and technology to maintain and strengthen relationships with their families back home in New Zealand, and in particular, with Natalie's grandparents. Twice a week she skypes them and they also sing to her via Skype. Music is a part of each day's events, rituals and interactions.

6.3.2 Music as a means to managing challenging environments and acquiring new experiences

Music is also used to assist with emotional regulation and learning new information. Natalie has to endure many medical appointments and Karen finds music is one of the few things which can calm her. "I find, because she's involved with so many different specialists and things, quite often, she gets poked and prodded and all the rest of it, she gets a bit upset. I find just holding her tight and singing *Twinkle Twinkle* to her, just so she's got a calming voice, and she does calm herself down when you start singing" (Mother, Interview 1; Diary Entry 21 September, 2014; 13 October, 2014; 10 December, 201413 January, 2015).

Natalie was born eight weeks premature and weighed just 1.2 kilograms. "She had a really tough start to life, we weren't expecting her to even live," Karen said (Mother, Interview 1). Natalie has a rare chromosomal disorder, Mosaic Trisomy 9, and experiences a range of developmental delays. She is under the care of an early intervention team who she sees once a week, either in her home or at their clinic. They have also found music is a great motivator for getting Natalie to participate in therapy and learning. In particular, her speech therapy team use song as a way of greeting her (Diary Entry 19 May, 2015) and helping her to settle in if she is "whingy" or "clingy" (Diary Entry 7 July, 2014; 15 September 2014; 8 December, 2014). Karen also uses song to help Natalie settle in with new early intervention team members. For example, when a new speech pathologist started working with Natalie in January, 2015, Karen wrote that Natalie was a "bit wary of Deb at start then interacted ok" once the song board came out (Diary Entry, 12 January, 2015). The speech therapy team introduced Picture Exchange Communication System (PECs) cards to communicate with Natalie during the course of this study, and the card that motivated her most was the one for dance. When it was introduced, Karen wrote in her diary "very excited when it was song time!" (Diary Entry 27 October, 2014). In January, after several months of working on PECs Karen wrote "Natalie very motivated by dancing and will consistently get the dance picture and bring it to me" (Diary Entry 5 February 2015).

6.3.3 Music as a means of socialisation and engaging with activities

Music is also a part of the extra-curricular activities they do together and outings they go on. Natalie goes to a music group; a swimming class and baby bounce session at the library most weeks. Each

one uses music extensively. Natalie didn't love swimming when she started but she does love the singing and this seems to distract her and make her smile and bounce up and down in time to the rhythm of the songs (Diary Entry 29 September, 2014; 10 November, 2014; 18 November, 2014).

6.3.4 Music as a tool for affective transitions

Natalie attends family day care twice a week, and her educator Ellie uses music to help her transition from home to care and to keep her calm. Again the most effective musical tool is singing (Diary Entry 5 May, 2014; 12 May, 2014; 26 May, 2014). Around May, 2014, I noticed in the diary entries music was being used more on arrival either in a song or a Wiggles DVD (Diary Entry, 26 May, 2015; 2 June, 2014; 30 June, 2014; 18 August, 2014; 1 September, 2014; 29 September, 2014; 17 November, 2014; 1 December, 2014; 19 January, 2015; 2 February, 2015). When asked about this Karen said "Ellie often says to me she's lost her voice that particular day because they've done lots of singing," Karen said. As a result, Ellie uses CDs in addition to her voice (Mother, interview 2). Ellie also taught the children a new song and practiced for many weeks. Karen and John were very excited when Natalie starting initiating the actions to *Open Shut Them* on her own (Diary Entry 17 November, 2014).

6.4 Natalie's Music Early Learning Program: a description of her participation

Every Thursday, if there is not a medical appointment; Karen and Natalie go to their MELP, twenty minutes away in a nearby suburb. John has only been a couple of times due to travel for work, but the first time he went he was impressed with how actively and independently Natalie participated. "I was surprised!" he said. "Natalie was just – sometimes she's quite clingy when she doesn't know people around and she won't leave mum. (She was) rushing out and grabbing instruments and looking at Clara's suitcase" (Father, Interview 1).

Natalie has been attending a MELP since she was two years old. Each week Karen and Natalie join other families sitting in a semi-circle on the floor in a classroom from an old school that has been converted to a community centre. Karen arrives early so Natalie has time to adjust and settle in. "I always get here early and just sit … so she can observe the room and we talk about going to music. I've got some little videos on my phone of her at music. So she can prepare herself for the day, 'yeah we're going to music, we're going to do some singing and dancing'. You can see that she's registering it" (Mother, Interview 1). Karen also arrives early for practical reasons – to get a spot at the front of the class near the group facilitator. "Because she's not walking around things, it means that she's closer to the instruments and Clara (the group facilitator). She can be a part of it" (Mother, Interview 1). Karen loves watching Natalie get involved with the activities and the other

children. When they first started going to their MELP Natalie was "really clingy with me… but I find (at) music now she's quite confident about shuffling across the room, looking at other kids and instruments and things. She's got a lot more confidence" (Mother, Interview 1). Karen likes that her group facilitator is a music therapist who understands Natalie's learning needs. She said the music therapist adapts activities to suit Natalie. "She has a little board with pictures of her different songs that she sings. Each child gets to choose one, when it comes to Natalie's turn she just gives her usually three options. Because Nat gets a bit overwhelmed with too many, she doesn't understand. So she'll sing a few words of each song, and Natalie now knows to pick one and hold onto it and puts it on her guitar" (Mother, Interview 1).

Karen documents in her diary entries, that when attending their MELP, Natalie is "happy and interested, watching closely" (Diary Entry 24 April, 2014) or "relaxed and happy" (Diary Entry 1 May, 2014). However, in May she wrote "bigger class, wasn't as relaxed" (Diary Entry, 22 May). When questioned about this, Karen said the smaller group sizes suited Natalie better. During the study, the group that Natalie attends grew in size and during the first and second observations there were moments when the noise levels did increase, and children did seem to be less engaged. At one point one child was crying and the sound bounced off the timber floor making it quite noisy. The group facilitator was able to bring calmness back to the group but there was a sense the group was not relaxed at this time. As the study progressed she settled into the bigger group nicely. By July, Karen wrote "first class back, much more relaxed and happy" (Diary Entry 24 July, 2014) and my observations at the second visit concur with this sentiment. Despite some moments of noise and disruption, Natalie seemed engaged throughout the majority of the session (MELP Observation 2).

During the first observation the children joined in a group circle activity after singing *Welcome To Music*. This involved everyone walking around in a circle holding onto a parachute while a ball was rolled around on it. Karen walked around in the group holding the parachute with one hand and carrying Natalie on her hip (MELP Observation 1). This activity seemed onerous for Karen. "Natalie is not walking, I do have to carry her and she is three (years old) and weighs nearly 14 kilos. So it does get a bit you know, up and down, up and down, lugging her around" (Mother, Interview 1; MELP Observation 1, 4 September, 2014). Natalie did not seem very interested in the activity; rather she clung to her mother for the duration. At the end of the song everyone sat down and the ball was rolled around to each child. When the ball arrived at Natalie she engaged well, smiled and was excited to have her turn. Karen also seemed very happy with her engagement and positive response (MELP Observation 1). During this activity the group facilitator played a gentle folk song *My Bonnie Lies Over The Ocean*, and Natalie kept reaching out to touch the guitar. Clara

took her hand on several occasions and facilitated her strumming the strings. Natalie would look up at Clara's face and smile each time.

The session unfolded with a mixture of activities that included singing, playing instruments and participating in group activities. Clara read a song book to the children after the parachute activity that required the children to do the actions of the monkeys in the story. Karen facilitated Natalie's participation throughout. At the end of the song book Clara invited the children to "bang on the drum" (MELP Observation 1). Karen re-positioned herself near the large gathering drum so Natalie could sit on her lap and she co-facilitated her playing. After this the children played a game where one child was a crocodile that caught all the monkeys (each child had a finger puppet). Natalie did not enjoy this activity, the interaction with the children seemed overwhelming and she didn't like her monkey being eaten by the crocodile. She was much happier playing her drum for the song that followed. She stood facing her mother and they played together, sharing a lot of eye contact and smiles. Natalie vocalised while she played and after some initial help, played the drum with the beater on her own. The session moved to a quieter section after this, and the children chose traditional songs to sing. Natalie chose *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star* off the song board and sat with her mother while doing the actions on her own. The session ended with a good bye song and Natalie waved good bye to Clara.

When asked what Natalie likes doing the most at music, Karen said "just fossicking through the instrument box" (Mother, Interview 1). She likes to "pick things up and shakes them and looks at them. She'll find something of interest and shuffle back to me with it" (Mother, Interview 1). When asked if she has a particular favourite instrument Karen says "in the drums there's a tall one and for some reason she likes the bottom of it, so she gets it and tips it upside down and puts her lips on the edge of it and looks down into it. It's the same drum, same routine always, I don't know why" (Mother, Interview 1).

Karen is adamant in her belief that the MELP supports Natalie to explore and play in her own way and in her own time. She doesn't always bang on the drum but she explores the drums and enjoys playing the "green froggy clackers" as well (Mother, Interview 1). Natalie is observed during a video to fossick through the instrument box until she finds the frog castanets. She takes them out, plays them and then shuffles back to Karen with a big smile on her face (Video Diary 2). "Because she's not coordinated yet with a lot of things, she's got a lot of fine motor skills, so I think banging things together can be quite difficult for her. But she likes the shakers and things" (Mother, Interview 1).

Over the course of the study Natalie's participation in the MELP was observed to change quite dramatically. Diary entries from October 2014 indicated that Natalie had settled in well to the large group and particularly liked playing the drums now (Diary Entry 24 October, 2014) as well as interacting more with the other children (Diary Entry 30 October, 2014). Video diaries show her playing a large gathering drum with another child. She is smiling and leaning towards him, making eye contact and copying his hand movements (Video Diary 13, Video 15). She is also observed to be playing the drums with mallets in Video Diary 14, a great improvement from the first interview when Karen reflected on how striking things was difficult for her.

Another developmental milestone was observed during the second observation (MELP Observation 2) session: Natalie participated in the group circle songs by walking around on her own holding her mother's hand. At the second interview, conducted on 9 February 2015, Karen was very excited to tell me that Natalie was now walking! After the welcome song was sung, Karen facilitated Natalie to dance along to *My Body Makes Music* before helping her dance to a *Freeze Song* with ribbons. The group did a circle dance and Natalie hopped down after being carried once and walked along next to her mother for *Here We Go Looby Loo*. Natalie appeared happy and engaged the whole time (MELP Observation 2). Natalie also enjoyed bouncing on a therapy ball, before participating in an activity where the children rolled a dice to decide what song to sing. For the instrument section, Natalie chose an ocean drum which she played with her mother. Again she didn't engage very much with the parachute activity but did appear to enjoy cuddle time with Karen for the quiet song *It's So Nice To Have A Cuddle*.

6.4.1 Bringing the MELP home

Karen brings ideas and concepts from their MELP into the home and uses these to support and drive Natalie's early intervention sessions and overall development, as well as add fun and meaningful moments to their day. Karen uses a nursery rhyme CD and her voice predominately at home to support their music making. "I guess I'm a bit more interactive with her nursery rhyme CD. She's getting to know her body parts as well, so we do like *Heads Shoulders Knees And Toes* and she's starting to get the hang of that now. Early intervention made up some little cards that Clara has on her board: *Incy Wincy Spider*, and *Row your Boat*, so we play with Natalie and get her to choose one. We sing that song as part of her learning and stuff here (home). Early intervention gave us [the cards] and they have a great toy library, so they got us a little drum," Karen said (Mother, Interview 1). In the home diary notes there is a weekly entry for singing songs from cards or the board at home (Diary Entry 19 April, 2014 and weekly thereafter). She also uses the song cards to support Natalie's communication skills, as outlined in Section 6.3.2.

Early in the study Karen reported that dancing was a part of their everyday rituals. Once Natalie was mobile, dancing became even more prominent in their daily interactions. Karen reported at the time of the second interview that "Natalie's got up and mobile and walking so she can drag me up to the stereo and wants more dancing every five minutes" (Mother, Interview 2, 9 September, 2015). Karen further elaborates at the third interview how Natalie's love for dancing had increased, and how she communicates this through dancing and also through the PEC dance card. "She would really respond to the dance queue and do the PECS. Pulling (it) off and bringing (it) to us so, you know, rewarding her with lots of dance and she just loves it so does that spontaneously now. She's always looking for her PECS folder to dance at every opportunity" (Mother, Interview 3).

The change in independent ambulation and increase in ability to dance is also evident in the almost daily diary entries of radio/dancing (15 April, 2014; 20 April, 2014 and at least weekly entries thereafter) and the video diaries showing the change from Karen holding Natalie to dance (Video Diary 3) to footage of Natalie taking Karen by the hand and leading her either to the television where a music DVD of the Wiggles was playing (Video Diary 4) or to the stereo to turn it on (Video Diary 4, Video Diary 7). There is a confidence and maturity present in Natalie's movements, and clear independence in her leading her mother, choosing the activity and directing it. In Video 4 you can clearly hear Natalie vocalising and see her sign gesture for more dancing and her mother appears happy and says "good girl". The extra dancing has also led to an expansion in the music on offer in the household. To keep up with demand Karen laughs and says "we just crank it up. I've been dragging out the old CDs from about 20 years ago and reliving my youth" (Mother, Interview 2). Video 6 shows Karen and Natalie dancing together to Guns' n Roses *Sweet Child of Mine*. They both appear very happy and to be enjoying the moment together.

Over the course of the study Karen also documented in her diary entries that Natalie was "starting to recognise nursery rhymes [like] *Twinkle Twinkle* [and] *Incy Wincy* – puts hand in the air or grabs my hand to do actions" (Diary Entry 6 May, 2014). She goes on to explain how Natalie is "recognising songs and very subtly doing things (hard for me to capture as she has to sit on my knee). [She] grabs my finger to her teeth 'this is the way we brush our teeth', starts kicking feet at 'If you're happy and we know it…" (Diary Entry 17 May, 2014). In October Karen wrote "Natalie is imitating play/dancing a lot more now" (Diary Entry 27 October, 2014). Towards the end of the year Karen wrote that Natalie was "starting to initiate actions to *Twinkle, Incy Wincy* and frog song [when] daddy sings nursery rhymes most nights" (Diary Entry 1 December, 2014). Video diaries also show this change and show Natalie sitting on her father's knee at night in her pyjamas just before bed. John sings and does the actions and Natalie watches intently, and gives him a clap at the end (Video Diary 8, Video Diary 9).

Natalie faces many challenges on a daily basis and her parents find fun and loving ways to support her as she rises up to meet them. Music is woven into moments of learning, growing, resting, playing and being together. Activities from the MELP can be seen underlying these moments. Recently Natalie was given a ukulele as a gift, and she loves to play with it, emulating her MELP leader when she does. "She got given a little pink guitar just recently as well and she had little pictures of songs, little nursery rhymes and she's pulling them off and puts them on the guitar like she does with MELP 2 without me prompting her" (Mother, Interview 3, 31 July, 2015).

6.5 Why Natalie attends a Music Early Learning Program: reasons parents provide for attendance at a MELP

6.5.1 MELP attendance to support early intervention and therapy

Natalie was born premature and has a diagnosis of Mosaic Trisomy 9. She has been involved with medical teams, appointments and therapies since her birth, including weekly appointments with the local early childhood intervention team. The educator appointed to Natalie had "started to see reports of music helping children with special needs and developmental delays" (Mother, Interview 1). Armed with this information, Karen and John "tracked down MELP 2 and started taking Natalie along. First couple of classes she was a little bit unsure, but now when we get there she's straight in and loves it" (Mother, Interview 1). This is the main reason Natalie's parent's give for attending a MELP – to support and supplement Natalie's early intervention and therapy program.

Over the course of the study, music was observed to support two developmental areas in particular – movement and communication. Natalie began walking unaided and this opened a whole new world of opportunity for her to pursue her passion for dancing. Prior to walking, one of her parents would hold her in their arms and dance around (Video Diary 3, MELP Observation 1; Diary Entry 15 April, 2015 and weekly thereafter), an activity that was observed to be pleasing to both parties. However, as Natalie grew carrying her was getting more difficult for Karen in particular, so her ambulation allowed for dancing to be actively included again.

Natalie's love of dancing was utilised to encourage her to engage with her new communication system (PECS) and to reward her for using it properly. The dance card is Natalie's favourite card and she is highly motivated to use it. The PEC cards are used at her MELP and the group facilitator has prepared songs and activities for the family to use in the home (Diary Entries 19 April, 2014; 29 April, 2014; 14 June, 2014). The family also take some of their songs to music for Clara to include in the session. It is interesting to note how music permeates the home and learning opportunities are rarely missed (18 June, 2014; 30 July, 2014; 2 September, 2014). Karen reflects how Natalie knows

all the nursery rhymes and anticipates the movements and how she has turned this into part of their everyday routine. “Because we do our nursery rhyme, it’s called *Bananas In Pyjamas* Nursery Rhymes CD and she anticipates a lot of the moves, like ‘We brush our teeth early in the morning’ and she’s grabbing her finger and putting it up to her teeth or ‘This is the way we brush our hair’, so we did that every day for months and months and months and that’s all continued now in our morning routines to get ready. It’s a great way to do the morning routines, it’s better than constantly having to tell children 'Have you brushed your teeth? Hurry up’. Karen explains further, “She understands so much, her level of understanding is huge, she just can’t communicate verbally but if you start babbling too much stuff at her she kind of looks at you going ‘hang on, slow down, let me process this’. So if we can keep the little songs going each day that she gets familiar with she knows that ‘oh yep, I need to brush my teeth now’.” (Mother, Interview 2). Karen summarises Natalie’s progress and her feelings when she says “she’s getting there, you know. She’s obviously delayed in a few areas but music’s certainly bringing her along I think. I’m really pleased with it” (Mother, Interview 3). Music has provided an alternative communication system for Natalie, one that allows her to express herself in ways that do not rely on words.

6.5.2 MELP attendance for enjoyment and positive experiences

Natalie’s days are not always straightforward. There are many appointments to go to and some of these are invasive. She also has to work hard to learn things others might take for granted. Her medical and allied health appointments are non-negotiable for her, and often involve therapies that are not ‘fun’ or people who are ‘scary’ to her. “We notice she gets quite scared of males because most of the doctors are males and they’re all wanting to poke and prod and do this and that to her, look in her eyes and mouth and stuff, so she gets a bit nervous, so I sing to her a lot” (Mother, Interview 2). “Just recently (she) saw the ophthalmologist, which is an eye specialist, and John was holding her down and someone was trying to peer in her eyes and she was getting all upset and so I just sung quietly in her ear *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star* and doing little actions and things and she calmed herself down a lot and was just concentrating on me and listening to my voice and things. So I do a lot of singing when we go to specialists and stuff” (Mother, Interview 2).

Music therapy and time at her MELP are moments in the week that Natalie enjoys, she gets to dance and play instruments, communicate and socialise with others and spend special time with her mum, and she gets to do this at her own pace and in her own way. All of this is of therapeutic value and all of it is on her terms. It is also a special time for Karen, who gets to enjoy doing something therapeutic with Natalie as well. “It’s something that I enjoy taking her [to] too, because she enjoys it. Sometimes you’ll go to various things and she just doesn’t want to be there, it is beyond her, too

overwhelming for her. But at her MELP you can just see how much she enjoys it, and it's something for her that she can do without being overwhelmed" (Mother, Interview 1).

6.5.3 MELP attendance to facilitate family closeness

Karen and Natalie spend just over a week at home together while John works as a Fly In Fly Out (FIFO) worker at a remote mine in Western Australia. Given the additional needs that caring for Natalie present, it could be assumed Karen is at risk of isolation. She doesn't see it this way though, and feels that she is very fortunate to be able to spend the time with Natalie. "I'm not working, I'm with Natalie all day and we just hang out together and do lots of singing and things," she said. "Then when John's home, he's home for six days so it's kind of like a week, you get tired from (being) on your own but when he's home for a week to take over, you know, we're not up early rushing off to work, we just have quite a relaxed lifestyle (Mother, Interview 1)". Whether John is home or away, music is used to facilitate closeness. This is through shared rituals such as the nightly phone in (see Section 6.2 for details). The songs sung are often those from the MELP. Karen says that every night when John rings Natalie is "glued to the phone" (Mother, Interview 2). This ritual is not only special to Natalie, but also to John who misses his daughter when he is away. "It's good she can hear my voice as well," he says (Father, Interview 1). It has also built camaraderie in the mine site, with many of the workers knowing that at this time in the afternoon John rings his daughter and many of the men come into the mess to join in singing the songs with him for Natalie.

For extended family, singing has also been the unifying factor for twice weekly skype calls across the seas. Natalie's grandparents don't get to see her face to face as they live in New Zealand, so they skype in and sing all her favourite songs to her and she is able to watch and hear them, and they are able to take delight in her doing the actions and smiling at them. "John's parents always sing… and she knows and gets all excited and she's bouncing up and down on your knee singing along with them" (Mother, Interview 1). John adds "that's twice a week we'll do that, she'll get nursery rhymes through the computer through skype" (Father, Interview 1). This seems a very special way of communicating and staying in touch with grandparents when you consider that Natalie is not able to speak to them. Instead, they can all focus on her strengths and love of music, and communicate through song. "It's hard because she can't say whether she's hungry or thirsty or anything like that, but she's quite clear with her music." This family plays to that strength on a united front.

6.6 Reflections on attending a MELP: the influence it has had on everyday life and parenting

Over the past year Natalie's mother has kept 15 videos and made 312 diary entries, all recording her daily interactions with music both within the family, with the early intervention team, with recorded music and with her MELP facilitator and at the MELP. Karen has captured and documented the ways in which Natalie uses music to interact and communicate with others, socialise with other children, settle into different settings such as childcare, appointments and public spaces such as malls and shops. Karen has participated in three interviews with me and I have observed them at two MELP sessions on two different occasions.

Over the almost two-year period (extended due to illness in the family and trips to New Zealand to care for loved ones) the way Natalie uses and engages with music has changed as her ability to move and communicate has improved. Now Natalie is able to be more direct in her choice of music by being able to lead her parents to the stereo, and more directive in choosing the activities she wants to participate in by choosing PECS cards that symbolise her desire to interact musically, particularly to dance. She appears to respond to the rhythmic elements of music, and moves her body to songs with a strong rhythmic presence. She is able to use hand gesture to clearly request songs, and direct her parents to sing them to her with gesture. Technology provides support to this family for using music in the home not so much to learn, but to stay connected, as they use phone technology to stay in touch and sing together each night and each week with extended family.

Music plays a role in supporting the family rituals and routines, and also in learning about new routines such as teeth brushing and getting dressing (Diary Entry 2 September, 2014). Waking up, bathing, and bed time all have their own special music ritual, and quite uniquely for this family, sharing nursery rhyme time before bedtime as a trio no matter what and despite any distance.

Karen feels that attending a MELP has positively shaped the way she uses music at home. She takes songs and content from the MELP and includes them in the learning materials at home and in their early intervention therapy sessions. "We work so closely with OTs and speechies and physios and you kind of get into that mode of thinking of 'well how can we make this a good situation, how can we make it fun?' I think I'm quite in tune with Natalie because I guess I'm lucky that I can stay at home with her and entertain her and get out and about" (Mother, Interview 2). Karen also shares her PECS with the MELP facilitator, who incorporates them into the weekly session. She feels that attending a MELP allows her to work with Natalie at "her level" as many things overwhelm her, but not music (Mother, Interview 1).

Natalie's parents believe that attending a MELP has also helped build their "confidence, personal confidence" (Father, Interview 2). Karen and John use music in their everyday parenting, and surround Natalie with musical toys and experiences. "It was never an intentional thing, but it seems to work" (Mother, Interview 1). Karen feels music is a great tool to add to all elements of their daily lives, as it is something they can do anywhere anytime. "It's something that's portable. You can do anywhere, anytime and just sing along in the car or sitting outside. It's not one of those things that, you know, you need any special equipment or anything for. You make it up as you go along" (Mother, Interview 3).

6.7 The plan from here: Natalie's musical future

The plan is to make it up as they go along and enjoy every day and live in the moment. This family celebrates the small wins and takes each day as it comes. Karen contemplates that Natalie is "doing well considering everything she's had thrown at her" (Mother, Interview 2). Karen and John plan to continue actively supporting Natalie's development and continue attending their MELP as long as Natalie is enjoying herself. "I think we've got a good thing (MELP) going on at the moment. She seems to respond to it. She seems quite happy. Like I say considering she can't tell me what she wants and needs at times, she's a happy wee thing and she's learning and exploring all the time" (Mother, Interview 2).

6.8 Commentary to the narrative case study and conclusion

For this family, attendance at a MELP has provided additional resources, ideas and support for their child's ongoing therapy. It has reassured them that they incorporate music well to support their child's needs and her ongoing growth and development. It has provided a reference point and reiterated to them that even though they don't identify themselves as musical people, they are in fact musical parents. Attendance has shaped the way the family uses music in the home, particularly in regards to singing songs together as part of their daily activities and family rituals.

CHAPTER 7: FINDINGS Narrative Case Study 4

Getting on and off the music train –navigating music and early learning and family life

7.1 Introduction: what it means to be musical in Angus' family

For Angus, music is fun and motivating. It is something he loves to do and more importantly, it is something he "does well in" (Mother, Interview 1, 29 July, 2014). Trisha, his mother, likes this because there are many things that Angus has to work hard at to do well. Angus is the youngest of three boys and all three boys have been involved in a MELP since the eldest Marcus was four (he is now eight) and Evan was a toddler. This was before Angus' parents knew that music would bring out the best in him and before they knew he had Down's syndrome. "It's good for us to see Angus at his best, which I think he is when he's having music in his life." For three and a half year old Angus, being musical is being at your best.

Being musical is not something that comes naturally to Trisha but she feels it is something Angus can do well and feel good about and therefore it is something they now all do. It has become central to their family life. Trisha does not describe herself as musical, and has no childhood memories of music herself. She says hers was "not a musical family. We listened to music…but we weren't active participants" (Mother, Interview 1). Her early memories of music are specific to learning it at school and not always good ones. "I have some memories. In Grade 4 we had a teacher who played a guitar in class, so they were the best memories that I had with music at school. Year 7, I had to learn the recorder at school, didn't like that, didn't like the singing that we did in class," Trisha said (Mother, Interview 1). Her husband has a love of music "but wouldn't sing a song" (Mother, Interview 1).

Trisha feels that to be musical means to be able to "read music" in order to "share [music] with other people" (Mother, Interview 1). While she can't read music (though she is learning) Trisha is able to share music with others, and she does so generously with her children, evidenced throughout her many video and diary notes. There are constant examples of her sharing music with the children, often through listening to CDs together (Diary Entry, 8 September 2014; 10 September 2014; 24 October 2014) or by incorporating music into their everyday rituals and routines. These include activities like nappy changing accompanied by song (Dairy Entry 1 October, 2014) through to singing *Old MacDonald had a Farm* to make teeth brushing easier (Diary Entry, 6 October 2014). "I can share my singing with the kids, but I still don't think of myself as a musical person. I probably use it, but I don't feel like I am musical or have musical ability. [I] probably have that creative ability in using music as a tool that will help the kids (Mother, Interview 1)".

Trisha certainly does use music creatively as a tool to help her children, and also to bring routine and ritual to her family's everyday lives.

7.2 Music and everyday lives: a typical day for Angus.

Music accompanies the family routines and rituals from sun up to sun down. Even before breakfast, while Trisha is getting Angus out of bed and ready for the day, she sings songs she has devised to accompany nappy changes and getting dressed routines (Diary Entry, 1 October, 2014; Video Diary 131). Into this song activity Trisha will entwine some developmental purpose as she is always looking for ways to incorporate Angus's early intervention goals into his everyday experiences. Nappy changing, for example, is also a time for some physiotherapy. "We might do a song while we're standing up on the change table and do a little bit of wiggling to build up his leg strength (Mother, Interview 1)".

7.2.1 Music to accompany morning routines and rituals

Breakfast is a fun and musical experience in Trisha's house, and this is a good time to work on "communication and interaction with Angus because we're all there. There's no distraction of going off here or there, we're in the one place" (Mother, Interview 1). "So breakfast time that's when Angus often requests music. That's good because it's an easy thing to put a CD on and he listens to that or we might…just sing some songs at the table" (Mother, Interview 1). In her home diary notes, Trisha recorded the family was together in the kitchen at breakfast time and a CD was playing. She wrote they were all "interactive, happy" (Diary Entry, 3 September 2014; 4 September, 2014). In Video Diary 33, Angus is sitting at the table eating, and in between mouthfuls he sings "Bye" along to the MELP CD *Goodbye Song*, and does the key signs as well. Shared music at breakfast time marks the first musical family ritual of the day.

Trisha says singing songs fits the way Angus learns and so she never misses a chance to sing to him. She does this for things that are fun, like getting dressed, and for things that are not so fun, like teeth brushing. "For brushing teeth, at the moment I'm singing *Old MacDonald Had a Farm* and that's his song" (Mother, Interview 1; Diary Entry 6^{t} October, 2014). Trisha explains that "teeth-brushing … is not enjoyable. But he likes that [song] so [I'm] trying to make the less enjoyable experiences [or] jobs that we have to do more enjoyable by going 'you're going to sing this song' and tackle it that way" (Mother, Interview 1).

7.2.2 Music for therapy

At the beginning of the study, Angus attended an early intervention service, a swimming lesson and a music class weekly. During the course of the study he also began a half day at a local kindergarten (with therapy support). Trisha reported that this all made for a busy week of therapy and intervention. One of the reasons Trisha liked taking Angus to his MELP so much is that she felt it was different to the pressure of therapy, but just as beneficial. Trisha believes at music all of Angus' therapy goals are reinforced, and she has the added benefit of spending special time with her son he and she both enjoy. "To me I can see Angus getting so much out of it and I feel like that's a forty-five minute window in each week where I know we're going to music and it's almost like I can tick off music therapy for him, or one-on-one with spending that time together under the [music teacher's] direction. That makes me feel like, yay, we're doing good things for Angus. That's part of his whole early intervention program, is to go to music" (Mother, Interview 1). Trisha explains further: "There's a big push. It feels like early intervention, in the first five years, you've got to get in there and do so much and it's quite hard to feel like you are doing enough at times because we're[(a] taxi driver, dropping the other kids off. By the time we do housework and just the normal things - wiping, sweeping, washing dishes - sometimes we think, are we doing enough [for Angus]? So I like it that we have some structure into Angus's week. As a parent, you just want – you want the best for your child, so you like to think that you cross off a few things. Music is great for me because I feel like he's going to a class, getting that social interaction, he has to listen, he's learning" (Mother, Interview 1).

Angus's early intervention team also think his attendance at music is excellent for his overall development. Angus's occupational therapist attended one of his MELP sessions to observe and said it was meeting his therapy needs as he was "engaged, as in observing, he's happy, he feels safe and there's repetition of singing or the vocal and all the tasks" (Mother, Interview 1).

7.2.3 Music throughout the day

For these reasons and others, music follows Angus through his day. The family listens to music in the car, including CDs from their MELP. In these instances, Angus is observed singing happily along to the music (Video Diary 6). Music is also a part of kindy days and home days, and Trisha feels he is most engaged in both settings when music is present (Mother, Interview 3). At home, Angus will request music and engage with music both with family and on his own. There are multiple video and diary entries documenting how Angus will sit on his own and listen to his MELP CDs and do actions to the songs (Video Diary 5, 134, 135, 144, 173), play his instruments along to the CD (Video Diary 89, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 143, 175, 176, 194, 195, 197), dance to the

CDs (Video Diary 1, 2, 3, 4, 7), and dance using props. He particularly loves to dance with the scarves (Mother Interview 3; Diary Entry 22 October, 2015; Video Diary 166, 167, 174, 194, 201 - 209).

7.2.4 Music to support and promote home play time with siblings

There are also numerous video examples of Angus engaging musically with his big brothers. This includes dancing and playing together to the MELP CDs as well as making music with a range of percussion instruments or a keyboard. In the Video Diary series 42 to 51 Angus is recorded sitting on the lounge room floor listening to the MELP CD and doing some actions and signs to the welcome song, but he seems a little distracted. In the next video (Video Diary 43) his big brother, Marcus, joins in and does the actions with him. But he does more than this, he prompts Angus to listen to the CD and follow the instructions. Together they begin to do the actions and sounds to a train song. Angus smiles and follows his lead, and he starts to laugh loudly and gleefully while participating enthusiastically. He takes over the lead and starts making the train sound and dancing and his brother follows him. The next video (Video Diary 44) shows how Marcus now follows Angus around in the circle game and lets him be the leader. The two boys continue this game with Marcus encouraging Angus to move to the music and make the sounds and soon it becomes a chasing game (Video Diary 47), with Marcus running and Angus chasing, and Marcus saying "you almost caught me!" The song ends, the game ends and Angus gives himself a clap (Video Diary 51). Angus's big brother is using music here to prompt and support his younger brother to learn, and by doing so supporting him to experience mastery and success. This interaction also allowed for them to play together and share a special time.

In addition to this shared musical play time, Angus enjoys exploring the music of his big brothers. Both brothers have completed the MELP 3 groups and progressed through the glockenspiel class to the keyboard class. Thus at the time of this study they were both learning the keyboard in a group class. Trisha noted how interested Angus was in his brothers' music learning, including their music books, CDs and their glockenspiels and keyboards. There is one video of Angus playing the glockenspiel (Video Diary 35) and twenty-seven videos of him at the keyboard exploring the different sounds and keys (Diary Entry 15 September, 2015; Video Diary 173) or playing it freely (Video Diary 160). When he finds a sound he likes "he will jiggle with his legs" (Mother, Interview 3). Trisha recorded in the diary one day: "Angus is playing on the keyboard. Angus likes and feels comfortable sitting at the keyboard. He likes to look at the music books and turn the pages" (Diary Entry 29 August, 2015). When he is doing this, Trisha thinks he is trying to be like his big brothers. In these videos he is observed turning the pages of the book, using one finger to start and then both

hands as he plays along. He stops to do any actions and clearly knows the songs that accompany each piece on the CD well (Video Diary 169, 170, 171). The songs on the CD are recorded as a backing track and are meant to be played at home during practice. Angus likes to press the buttons on the keyboard and experiment with the different sounds, not just the set track for each song. Musically they are very simple, with a tonic, subdominant and dominant chordal structure, but the rhythmic patterns are quite fun and this is what Angus seems to enjoy and respond to. "He quite happily will sit there and experiment on the keyboard, and will turn the pages in the book so he's copying what his brothers are doing," Trisha says (Mother, Interview 3).

7.2.5 Music for family rituals, a full circle of the day

As evening descends, music accompanies the family afternoon play and evening rituals. Bedtime rituals in particular seem to be accompanied by music. Trisha uses quiet music to help Angus relax prior to bed and also at bedtime. In the video diary series 153 to 159 Angus is in bed cuddling a big stuffed toy, Iggle Piggle. They are listening to a CD and doing actions to the song *Johnny Works With One Hammer* (Video Diary 153). Angus moves his head to the beat of the song and then at the end of the song when Johnny goes to sleep he puts his head on the pillow next to Iggle Piggle and snores loudly (Video Diary 154, 156). He remains lying and listens to the next song on the CD *Oh Where Oh Where Has My Little Dog Gone* (Video Diary 155) and *I'm A Little Tea Pot* (Video Diary 157, 158). Trisha enters the room and appears to turn off the CD and sings one of the songs from the CD to Angus to settle him down. The room is dark and she sings softly. Angus can be heard breathing calmly along to her singing. On another occasion, the MELP CD can be heard playing softly in the background as Angus goes off to sleep in the darkened room (Video Diary 57).

7.3 Angus' Music Early Learning Program: A description of his participation

Angus has been attending his MELP since he was a baby. Trisha believes that he feels "happy and safe in the MELP 3 room because he's grown up in that environment and the structure of the class is very similar from one class to the next with different songs coming in and out" (Mother, Interview 1). Trisha believes this structure means the children can build and learn while feeling safe, and for Angus he can participate at his own pace. She explains this and the structure of the classes as follows:

"So we – all the parents or grandparents go in with their children and take a seat and there might be a container of scarves or balls in the middle. Just as people are settling in, the kids can go grab a scarf or a ball and there might be some gentle music on in the background. They're at their leisure. They're getting used to, 'oh yeah, we're here in this room'. Then when we're ready to start, Katrina

will say hello and welcome everyone and we sing a hello song. Depending on what class you're doing, they have a welcome song that goes for that term or that semester. So it's the same song. Then we'll move into a song and this semester we've started a new class, so new songs, new materials. The words are up for the adults on the wall in the room. So the song that we've been doing is about trains. We just slowly build the components of the song. Like it might start off simply, and then we add in some more actions or more variations from the basic song. We may do another song while we're sitting down and then we might stand up and march around the room to the beat of a drum and do stop and then squeezing hands. So it might be like march, march, march, march, march, march, march and stop and squeeze, squeeze, squeeze, squeeze. Then we might do – when we're doing the drum bit, we might do a little bit of fast – like go, go, go, go and get up on their tippy-toes, run, run, run and stop and for just that length of time, so the kids have to learn to listen to and respond to what Katrina's doing. Then there might be a song which has a simple dance to go with it, or some actions. Towards the end of the class it's quiet time where we all just get to lie down or sit and rock and listen to some beautiful music and not worry too much about what the kids are doing (Mother, Interview 1)".

7.3.1 MELP to support special bonding time

On two occasions, Trisha and Angus were observed at their MELP, and Trisha also kept some video diaries of one of their MELP classes (Video Diaries 7 to 16). Throughout the class Trisha and Angus stayed close together, shared many cuddles and smiles, and constantly looked at one another and maintained strong eye contact through all the activities.

Each class that was observed began with a regulatory exercise followed by a greeting song. Angus responded well to the regulatory exercise, the *Bounce and Squeeze* activity, where the group facilitator led the group to bounce the children on their laps in time to a set rhythm set in simple duple time for four bars, and then hold the children on their laps for another four bars, squeezing (or cuddling) them for minims and the releasing, and cuddling again.

During the first observation session (24 November, 2014) Angus watched the other children in the group very closely. The greeting song included a number of actions such as tapping body parts and clapping hands and while Trisha facilitated the actions, Angus watched the other children doing them. This pattern of Trisha facilitating and Angus observing the other children continued throughout the movement songs and most of the instrument section as well. For the marching song Angus walked next to Trisha, holding her hand and laughing. He particularly liked the running (quaver beat running on tip toes) and did so well with some support from his mother.

The children were given a set of egg shakers to play after the movement section was complete. Again, Angus watched the other children closely and for the last song he played up and down on his own following the concepts. He appeared very proud of himself and kept looking back to his mother who would smile and give him a little clap. The children also learned to play a new instrument during the session, a triangle. After some instruction they each played along to a recorded music track. Angus found the coordination tricky at first but soon got the hang of it and again appeared proud, evidenced through big smiles and lots of positive comments from his mother (MELP Observation 1). The time in the session when he was most active was during the book reading. Angus stood up and walked on his own to sit with the group facilitator and listened intently throughout. He participated in the actions without facilitation and then returned to his mother after the book and waved goodbye during the goodbye song.

7.3.2 MELP attendance to support autonomy

During the second observation visit six months later, Angus was observed to be more independently involved in both making music (playing his stir xylophone) and moving to music. Angus danced with the group facilitator and moved in time to the marching song on his own. The first time he watched, the second time he completed the walk and run on his tippy toes independently. Trisha reflected during the second interview in March, 2016, how Angus had mastered the art of tippy toe walking recently and credited this to his MELP. “In the last few weeks… he has learnt to walk on his tippy toes at music…he’s quite happy with that, so the podiatrist will be happy with that. Angus does have some issues with his feet…so that’s been good, and he’s been able to do that. He does it quite often at home (Mother, Interview 2). This can be seen in the videos (Video Diary 147) where Angus listens for the change of pace in the music (played on a CD) and begins running on his tippy toes around the lounge room.

7.3.3 MELP structure to support learning

When asked what Angus responds to most at his MELP, Trisha reported the book reading (Mother, Interview 3) and the overall structure of the class in general. “Angus responds well to structure… [and] to quiet music. When he hears quiet songs, he thinks it’s quiet time, he just lies down” (Mother, Interview 2). This is seen both in the music class (Video Diary 14) and at home listening to the MELP CD (Video Diary 142). On further reflection, Trisha thinks Angus likes the books because of the rhythm involved in reading them. “All the books that we read they have lots of rhythm to the words. This’s his favourite pile. He’s doing lots and lots of reading like this (points to Angus who is sitting next to us with a pile of books reading while the interview is being conducted)

where he will just sit and read and say his words, and he just loves it," she said. (Mother, Interview 3).

7.4 Why Angus attends a Music Early Learning Program: reasons parents provide for attendance at a MELP

Trisha and her husband Ben didn't have "any big musical aspirations" for the children when they were little (Mother, Interview 1). Rather, Trisha witnessed something that she thought was truly magical once at her playgroup that led her down this musical path. "I was involved in a local playgroup and one of the mums who was going to MELP 3 said 'why don't we get Katrina from MELP 3 to come and do a special one-off workshop'. I just saw Katrina in action and she just waved this web of magic over all the children and my eldest at that time was four-years-old and he was in a spell listening to Katrina. I was thinking, 'we've got to get on to this' " (Mother, Interview 1).

7.4.1 MELP attendance to support early childhood development

After seeing the MELP 3 program at their playgroup Trisha enrolled her sons. "So we started when Marcus was four turning five, I think. Evan our second child started as well. We thought that music would improve Marcus' listening skills and that would get him to slow down at times too and also learn about loud and soft. So that was our main aim and probably still is. We're not too concerned at the end of all the music, whether he can play an instrument or not. But yeah, just the learning that goes along the way" (Mother, Interview 1). Trisha has insisted both older boys learn the keyboard because she and her husband believe it supports their overall development.

Angus attends his MELP each week and his parents clearly identify their main reason for attending the MELP is to support his overall development as well as his therapy goals (see Section 7.4.2 for further details on the latter). At the start of the study Angus was in the youngest age group and moved up during the study to the toddler group. Trisha says while he is the eldest in the class he is "definitely in the right class for his developmental limit" (Mother, Interview 2).

Trisha feels MELP 3 has done a great deal to support Angus' overall development. She describes her son as an "observer" (Mother, Interview 1, Interview 2), and reflected throughout the study how she believes he feels safe in the MELP 3 space, therefore when he is ready he begins to participate more and this supports his development. During the second interview (Mother, Interview 2) half way through the study, Trisha reflected on a class that she felt was a turning point for Angus. "We had the most fantastic lesson when he just turned it on," she said (Mother, Interview 2). Prior to this class she'd been thinking "we just observe, observe. And sometimes I think the other parents; they

don't get to see Angus do like I know that he can do. I tell Katrina he can do, but it's nice when you feel that other people can see his potential" (Mother, Interview 2).

There is also a clear crossover from what Angus observes in the class to home. The week Trisha took the video camera to the MELP session Angus was videoed observing the children doing an activity where they spin around to a recorded song (played on a CD) and at the end all descend with the music and fall onto the floor. This activity is repeated several times (Video Diary 11, 12, 13) and each time Angus stands and watches the other children doing the actions. Trisha then recorded Angus doing the actions to the same song in the lounge room at home while the MELP CD played. He recognises the music and knows it means time to walk around the room (Video Diary 17, 19) and when the pace and pitch changes, Angus says "weee", and starts to spin around and fall down (Video Diary 18, 20).

7.4.2 MELP attendance to support early intervention and therapy

When Trisha was pregnant with Angus she was already attending a MELP and was confident that once he was born and enrolled it would be beneficial for his development, just as it had been for his two big brothers. She did not have early intervention goals in mind, but this became a large focus of their attendance at their MELP when her son was born with additional needs. Trisha reflects on this period of time saying: "Angus has additional needs. He has Down's syndrome, which we didn't know before he was born. So we've already enrolled in music thinking that this is fabulous and then Angus comes along and that's been – it has been fabulous for Angus" (Mother, Interview 1).

Trisha feels their MELP provides a space to practise weekly therapy goals, and reinforce his early intervention program. In particular, the MELP supports Angus with his speech therapy goals to use his signing and work on his communication skills; his physical therapy goals including his gait; and his occupational therapy goals such as grasp work, fine motor coordination and social skills.

7.4.2.1 MELP attendance to support communication goals

Angus is motivated by music, and he will communicate when he wants to make music (Mother Interview 1) or listen to music (Video Diary 33). Trisha believes the use of song books at the MELP has helped Angus learn words and the key word signs that go with these. "He's quite good at learning the actions that go with the songs and he'll do them at home more than he'll do them in class (Mother, Interview 1)". In the home videos Angus can be seen listening to the MELP CDs, turning the pages of his books and doing actions to accompany the songs (Video Diary 5). In Video Diary 131 Trisha is reading the book and making the noises of the train with Angus. Trisha wrote in

her home diary that Angus is "exploring, quietly content" when looking through his books at home (Diary Entry 1 September, 2014).

During the course of the study, communication goals became the priority of Trisha's early intervention goals for Angus (Mother Interview 2). He started attending a kindergarten without her one morning a week, and she wanted to make sure he could communicate his needs. In general, she explained, he would only communicate something when he saw it, rather than when he felt it. Trisha provides an example: "Angus might request a drink, and so he'll do a key word sign for drink, but only if he sees his drink bottle. So we want him to be able to request things that he can't see. And he can't see music …but's it's inside of him…We want him to be able to say to his preschool teachers 'I'm thirsty. I want a drink', the way he requests music without having to see it to be prompted... Music is the thing that gets him going. He's more interactive with music than anything else" (Mother, Interview 2). At the third interview, conducted six months later (November 2015), Trisha reported very happily that Angus's "speech has really taken off in the last few months" (Mother, Interview 3). She explained the goal now was to try for "two words at a time… He can say words, lots of words so we're expanding that but when he's requesting we want him to be able to say two words" (Mother, Interview 3).

7.4.2.2 MELP attendance to support school readiness

Trisha also believes attendance at their MELP has helped Angus with school readiness. Trisha believes that listening to music and learning to hear the changes in tempo and pace at the MELP have taught Angus to be a good listener (Mother, Interview 2) and this has helped with his transition to kindergarten. She directs me to some home videos (Video Diary 135, 164) where it is clear Angus is listening for the direction to do an action, such as 'swing your arms', or 'go up and down with your arms'. The direction is accompanied by a change in the music and Angus both follows the sung instruction and responds to the musical cue which is represented by a change in pace or rhythm. "I'm rapt with that" Trisha says with a smile (Mother, Interview 2). Trisha also reported with pride that the physiotherapist and teachers were "surprised at how well Angus will sit and listen. And I think it's from MELP 3…I think Angus' behaviour in that time has exceeded everyone else's expectations of him" she says (Mother, Interview 2).

7.4.3 MELP attendance to support sibling unity and bonding

Trisha has three sons all of whom have participated in a MELP program for the past four years. During the first interview I asked Trisha if the big brothers sing to Angus. We had been discussing how music was shared at the breakfast table as the whole family was together and it presented a

good time to work on communication and interaction skills with Angus. Trisha answered: "They know some of Angus's songs from hearing the CD, or that Angus and I are doing the song. So they know his favourite ones. They do sing to him sometimes, but not all the time. Like big brothers, they're more focused on [themselves]; things that they want to do" (Mother, Interview 1). At this stage of the study there were no video or diary entries, and it was interesting to reflect on this in light of the subsequent 209 videos that Trisha kept which showed an enormous input and influence from Angus's big brothers. Music was observed to be something the big brothers shared with Angus regularly (Video Diary Series 21 to 31; Video Diary Series 42 to 52; Video Diary Series 148 to 152) and they did so in clearly loving and empathic ways.

In one video series Angus is first seen doing his own thing, dancing to the wind it up song and spinning and falling down (Video Diary 17 to 20). His brothers are seen in the background doing their own thing, then they join in. At first they are clowning around for the camera (Video Diary 21) but they join in the spinning game with Angus. They walk around the room with him and dance (Video Diary 22, 23) and they all spin around and fall down in time to the musical prompts (Video Diary 26 to 28). Their play becomes quite boisterous at this point and Angus is knocked over. He sits and watches his older brothers' dance around (Video Diary 29) smiling and laughing, before getting back up and chasing them in a circle game again (Video Diary 30, 31). Angus's brothers don't change the music or the game, but rather join Angus in his game and celebrate his success in completing the dance or action by clapping at the end.

These kind of supportive interactions and musical engagements are observed time and again throughout the study. On one family road trip, the three boys are videoed in the back of the car listening to music (Video Diary Series 148 to 152). Angus begins dancing in his chair, clearly enjoying the song, laughing as he sings. Trisha explains that "there are certain radio songs that really appeal to Angus. One of them is '*Bills*'. I couldn't sing it but Angus just loves it and I think we played it twice with the whole song and filmed it, and he's just bursting with happiness. His whole body is into the song. There's one movie (video diary), all three of them, the boys in the back seat are all just bopping away. So I think we're learning that Angus likes quite 'boppy' music, so that will get him going" (Mother, Interview 3). Trisha noted in her written diary the "kids are sad at the end of the song" (Diary Entry, 22 August, 2015) because it is over. What is also observable is the older brothers sharing this moment of joy with their little brother, joining in his song, sharing his happiness in that moment, not requesting to change the song or take over the music choices.

Throughout the study there are many moments captured in diary, video and through interview reflection that show a deep respect for Angus from his big brothers. They embrace his music, sing

his favourite songs, do his favourite dances, and let him choose music in the car. They support his musical expression and share in his musical moments of triumph by singing with him, clapping when he succeeds at a song or dance, and laughing and dancing joyfully with him when the opportunity presents itself.

7.4.3.1 The impact of older siblings on music engagement and exposure in the home

Towards the end of the study (November 2015) Trisha reflected how the videos she had been taking had begun to change. "I've been looking at [the videos over] the last few days reviewing them and what I think I've noticed is that a lot of the movies that I've taken of Angus, there's some where it's his music but a lot of them it's Marcus or Evan's music, so keyboard music, and Angus will know the actions to their songs. Like he's just learning because they're doing it or he pops in for the last ten minutes of their class and sees things, so there's almost like 50/50 of probably more Evan's music and then Angus' music" (Mother, Interview 3). On reflection, Trisha discusses how she is noticing more and more how the music of Angus's older brothers is impacting on his learning and development. During the second half of the study Trisha documented 27 different occasions where Angus would initiate playing the keyboard, including 'reading' his older brothers' music books at the keyboard. It is evident in these videos Angus knows the songs and he anticipates the actions that accompany some of the songs (Video Diary 184), turns the pages on cue (Video Diary 181, 183, 185, 187) and places his fingers on the notes to play (Video Diary 191 to 193) or changes the rhythm buttons to suit the new song (Video Diary 193).

7.5 MELP attendance for mum: a chance to recharge and seek support

Trisha is busy living in a time when busy seems to be the new norm. She used words throughout the study like 'taxi', 'parent group' and 'housework' reflecting the many roles she has in a day. She also has to build in additional time for Angus's early intervention visits and activities, and space for him to take the time he needs to get things done, and to learn and consolidate new information, activities and routines. Add to this the recent news that Angus has not received support funding for his preschool next year and Trisha also reports feeling stressed, but she says it's not uncommon to be turned down for funding. "It's a common thing…we will put in an appeal and so we'll just see what happens there" (Mother, Interview 3). But all of these things take time and energy. Not surprisingly, Trisha doesn't feel she has enough time or resources to do all the things she wants to do to support Angus. She reported during the third interview that she was "running out of energy to keep it going" (Mother, Interview 3).

For these reasons Trisha has to build into her weeks some time for herself, and some support networks. Trisha identifies the MELP and community that surrounds it as an important support network for her, and part of her coping strategies to manage a busy and sometimes stressful parenting life. Trisha does not have any family living near her and she feels this sometimes adds to her levels of stress. "All our family are spread out in capital cities around Australia," she said in Interview 3. "Katrina (the MELP facilitator) is part of our extended family. Especially when, like hearing Marcus and Katrina go off and play, like that's an adult that's in Marcus's life. Marcus doesn't have any uncles or aunties down the road" (Mother, Interview 3). So Trisha says being a part of the MELP community provides her with support for her children as part of their extended family. Once a year Katrina runs a music mum's night and invites the women from the MELP community. Trisha says she goes along to these as they're enjoyable nights out (Mother, Interview 1) and reinforces part of her extended support networks.

Trisha also believes attending the MELP provides a space in her week where she gets to relax as well. Not only does the MELP attendance ensure she and Angus get to spend some quality face to face time together, she also gets to relax and listen to some lovely music. At the end of each MELP session the group facilitator puts on a CD of easy listening music and encourages everyone to lie down and just listen. Trisha explains "I love lying down and I used to worry what Angus was doing in the class like whether he would bother other parents lying down. It's taken me a while to just [say] 'no, this is relaxation for me too'" (Mother, Interview 3). Video Diary 14 captures Angus lying on the floor, looking around the room while the gentle music of the day plays in the background at his MELP, and his mother is lying next to him taking the video.

7.6 Reflections on attending a MELP: the influence it has had on everyday life and parenting for this family

Over the past year and a half, Angus's mother has collected 209 videos and made 101 diary entries, all recording his daily interactions with music both in the home and the community. She has captured moments where Angus listens to or makes music on his own, with his brothers or with her; she has captured and documented the ways that Angus interacts through music with his peers at his MELP; and also how this family uses music to accompany long and regular car trips. In doing so Trisha has documented the many ways in which she uses music to support Angus to meet his early intervention therapy goals, how she has woven music into their everyday lives to build family unity, and further to this, how the family uses music to strengthen their ties to each other and to Angus. Trisha has also participated in four interviews and Trisha and Angus were observed at two MELP sessions on two different occasions.

Over the course of the study, the way Angus used and engaged with music improved as did his ability to move, participate and communicate. He has worked very hard to improve physical and communication independence. Trisha said during the final interview: "There's a lot of background work going into achieving what we have" (Mother, Interview 3).

Music plays a role in supporting family rituals and routines, such as breakfast music, afternoon playtime and bedtime music, and in completing mundane tasks or chores, such as teeth brushing and long car trips. The family live in a rural setting and often have long drives. Video Diary series 148 to 151 shows how music is used to make the trip fun and to unify the family, particularly the boys, to work together in creating this fun environment. Music is also used in these trips for educational and therapeutic benefit by playing CDs from the MELP that reinforce the current therapy goal areas (Video Diary 152).

Trisha has no doubt attending a MELP has had a profound impact on her family. She identifies the MELP leader as an adult she can rely on and someone who is a part of her sons' extended family. She says there have been many positive developmental and emotional outcomes from attending over a number of years, as outlined in this case study.

Trisha also says MELP attendance has positively influenced the way she uses music at home, saying she is comfortable singing to her children, even though she doesn't feel she is a competent singer (Mother, Interview 1). Trisha sings throughout the day, and she identifies moments in the day where she uses songs from her MELP to sing to Angus to help with tricky situations. In particular, she incorporates the tidy up song into everyday life (Mother, Interview 3) and uses singing to help with transitions, like getting into the car seat. Trisha says they have songs for "hopping into the car seat like 'arms in, arms in, got to put our arms in' so we make songs up so that helps, and singing at the change table" (Mother, Interview 3; Diary Entry 1 October, 2014; Video Diary 132, 133). Trisha also uses strategies taught in the MELP, like the regulatory activity of bounce and squeeze to a set beat to help Angus calm down if he is feeling restless (Diary Entry 11 September, 2014).

In addition to the singing, Trisha uses the MELP CDs daily at home and in the car. Her older boys also practice their keyboard music daily (using an accompanying CD). Angus listens to the CDs and reads the books from his class daily (for example: Video Diary 145, 146; Diary Entry 16 September, 2014; 22 September, 2014; 23 September, 2014, 29 September, 2014; 12 October, 2014; 13 October, 2014, 18 October, 2014; 27 October, 2014). He also dances to the CDs, following the instructions learned in class to complete actions and routines (Video Diary 196) and plays with his own instruments to accompany the CDs (Video Diary 197).

7.7 The plan from here: Angus's musical future

The plan for Angus is to continue attending his music and movement group for the foreseeable future. Trisha says there are many lifelong benefits for him attending, and he really enjoys attending because he feels safe and comfortable in the MELP environment. Importantly, Angus gets to shine at music and be the best that he can be.

7.7.1 Getting off the music train

The end of the study came at an interesting time for Trisha and her family. While Angus will continue at MELP 3, and her middle son Eric will continue keyboards for one more year, her eldest son Marcus is "retiring" as he puts it. This has brought up many mixed feelings for Trisha as she reflects on the four years he has been attending the programs: starting with the music and movement program; the glockenspiel program; and then the two-year-long keyboard program.

Trisha says when she first met Katrina, Marcus was "enthralled and at her feet doing whatever she said. I was like 'this is amazing, this is magic. We need to do this'" (Mother, Interview 3). She explains further: "Why we started coming to music when Marcus was four, was to improve [his] listening skills" (Mother, Interview 3) and while he has learned to play the keyboard, Trisha is clear this wasn't the main reason for enrolling him. "I can't see him playing a musical instrument well, like proficiently, when he's 18-25, but I still want him to be able to relax and chill out with music" (Mother, Interview 3). Trisha wants music to be something Marcus can turn to to help him relax as "he's highly strung and can get stressed" (Mother, Interview 3) "He's reading really well and he'll happily go off and read (to relax). And I also want to be able to say 'you know, why don't you put the music on?' and for him to have his own collection of music that he knows that if he listens to that music he will feel calmer or happy or 'dancy'. So I still think it will be really important for Marcus" (Mother, Interview 3).

Despite having made this decision and agreeing with Marcus it is time to retire from keyboard lessons, Trisha worries he will be missing out. "I feel like if we stop music for Marcus now, is that it? I feel like are we hopping off the train… and it keeps going where other people continue to get that benefit. All the crossing the right/left side of the brain. For Marcus, he's quite bright but getting the knowledge up in his brain to his fingertips…" (Mother, Interview 3). Marcus is involved in other activities too, as are the other boys, and Trisha says she is now "subscribing to learn skills that we used to have just in our families… A hundred years ago people would have been around the piano and getting it or they would have been rolling down the hill down the road with all the other kids rolling down the hill" (Mother, Interview 3).

7.7.2 Challenges to making music in the home

At the time of the final interview, Marcus had one more keyboard lesson to go. Trisha said, in relation to practicing at home they've had some battles. "He's a very passionate character…For me, I'm the person at home that's directing and pushing and – what's the word? Facilitating music homework. So if I don't do that then it doesn't happen. I was running out of energy to keep it going" (Mother, Interview 3) and so this musical era for Trisha and her eldest son has come to an end. Trisha says the things that affect the amount of music time she has to share with her boys now is "energy and time" (Mother, Interview 3). She plans to continue with Evan's keyboard lessons with "new strategies" (Mother, Interview 3) and continue with Angus at four-year-old kindergarten and his MELP. There will be ongoing time pressures but, as Trisha reflects "that will be forever" (Mother, Interview 3).

7.8 Commentary to the narrative case study and conclusion

This narrative case study has provided a commentary on the musical lives of Angus and his family, and reflects the journey they have travelled together on the music train so far. Attendance at a MELP has provided Trisha with ways to bring her family together, build traditions, routines and rituals, and has provided practical resources and ideas that have helped her support Angus's early intervention and therapy goal attainment. Attendance has openly shaped the way they use music in the home and in their family, particularly the use of the MELP CDs in everyday music making at home.

Trisha uses a wide range of songs and content, such as the scarf dancing, as well as structures from the MELP to reinforce her musical parenting, something that she does daily and well, despite not feeling that she is a musical person.

CHAPTER 8: FINDINGS Narrative Case Study 5

Musical heritage and musical hopes, building for the future, learning from the past

8.1 Introduction

Eleven month old Harriet is immersed in musical play and ritual every day. Her house is full of all kinds of music including live music, created through singing and playing instruments, and recreated music played on CDs, videos and the iPad. This music is often accompanied by dancing, or it accompanies games and family time, family routines and rituals. It is something that brings together three generations of the family in fun and loving ways as captured in hundreds of videos and diary entries over the course of a year. To understand why Harriet's days are filled with music, we need to explore her musical heritage. Therefore this case study reflects on the musical experiences of her parents and grandparents before focusing on Harriet's musical day.

8.2 Harriet's musical heritage

When Harriet's mother, Claire, had Harriet's big brother David seven years ago, she was on the other side of the world, away from her own family and in a culture different from her own. As a stay-at-home mother, music was one of the main things that kept her amused with her new baby. Her reasons for choosing music for this role are multiple – heritage, memories, opportunities and experience all played roles in choosing music. But it was a random act of kindness in the form of a musical instrument from a lady who lived on her street that sparked the music making with her first child.

"You know how people give you really random little toys when you have a baby?" Claire said in her initial interview. "Somebody, a lovely person who lived in a townhouse up the street, gave me a little child's glockenspiel, and it wasn't tuned. That was a real turning-point for me, because I think it's really wrong to give a child an un-tuned instrument. So I went to a music shop, and bought him a three-octave glockenspiel, so that he would be able to have notes laid out in front of him and just hear where a note should be and get his ear in. While we were there, we also bought a couple of nice drums. We'd just found that David was a really musical little kid, like from when he was a baby. You know how you do clapping with babies? I've got an eleven-month-old and she claps. But around the time David was getting his first teeth, he could clap in time to music. I was just amazed, and that was when I thought, he's good at this, so I've got to do something with it (Mother, Interview 1, 11 March, 2015)".

Claire grew up on a farm in regional Australia, and Harriet's father, Jan, grew up on a farm in rural Norway. While Claire used to catch a bus 90 minutes to school, Jan used to ski cross-country with a ski bus (children meeting at each other houses along the way and skiing together) seven kilometres each way to get to his. Neither Claire nor Jan had the opportunity to learn music formally but both showed an interest in it. Claire says Jan's family were not musical at all. "He is into music, but the family weren't musical" (Mother, Interview 1). Jan's family farm was near a small Norwegian village, where traditional music was highly rated. "Norwegians all rate Norwegian traditional music quite highly" (Mother, Interview 1). Jan's father was killed in an accident when he was a baby and his mother was "stranded on an operating farm with three children, and her mother-in-law [was] on the neighbouring property, who was also widowed, but not quite at that same stage. She (Jan's mother) just developed a whole heap of mental health problems, because of her totally stuck situation" (Mother, Interview 1).

Harriet's grandmother experienced further isolation due to no one speaking her dialect in the rural area she now lived. Jan's family farm was located on a mountain far from the school he skied to each day. The school was funded by the local council, which couldn't afford qualified teachers. Claire doesn't think there was a lot of music at the school "this was a kind of [an] isolated, rural area. Jan knows a few songs from his childhood and he only knows a few lines of them, and he just sings them again and again. And his uncle, who was nearby, listened to American country music, so he listened to lots of Willie Nelson and stuff" (Mother, Interview 1).

For Harriet's mother Claire, music was a constant companion on the farm growing up. Her mother loved listening to music, and her father sang in a strong, loud voice. Her grandfather lived with her family and he sang as well. Growing up, Claire loved music and wanted to learn the piano, but her mother did not allow her to learn, despite having been taught herself as a child. Claire's mother had a complex relationship with music, as a result of being forced to learn the piano as a child at a boarding school. Despite loving to listen to music, Claire's mother, Jane, did not like to make it. "It is really sad, she's quite good. We had a piano when I was little and I wanted to learn it. [But] we lived on a farm, and I couldn't have music lessons. My mum would show me things, if I really, really asked her and said 'Mum, I'm stuck. What's this?' and she showed me the basic things, like that's C. Everything else I just had to work out for myself, because she was too embarrassed to play, too shy to play. Didn't like it, like all this weird stuff, even though she could do it really well" (Mother, Interview 1).

Harriet's grandfather had been in the Air Force, and he "learned to play the piano in the officers' mess. So he had all these dirty songs from the Air Force. He used to sit down and just play them

really, really, loud, – he couldn't play softly at all - and sing and play at the same time, so that was sort of nice" (Mother, Interview 1). Claire's grandfather was responsible for dropping the children off at the bus each day. "Grandpa, who was born in 1905…used to sing a lot as he drove his old ute. He drove us to the bus stop and that sort of thing, and would sing *Bye Bye Blackbird*" (Mother, Interview 1). Claire has fond memories of growing up in a house where someone was always singing or listening to music, yet she feels there was something a little sad about music in those early days, when her mother or the one local piano teacher wouldn't teach her. "My friends, who I went to school with, got to do music with Penny (the local teacher). When I said to Penny 'can you give me lessons' she used to always just talk to Mum and say 'I'm not doing anything here that you can't do', to my mum, and 'you show her'. So I didn't get to" (Mother, Interview 1).

Claire went on to teach herself the piano and learned the recorder at school. She completed the two years of mandatory music studies in early high school but didn't pursue it as an elective. Claire had wanted to learn the clarinet once she was at high school, but again the opportunity did not come. After school, Claire went on to sing in professional choirs as an adult. She moved to Melbourne to study and that is where she and Jan met. They moved to Norway to live and that is where their first child, David, was born.

Before she left for Norway, Claire witnessed her mother's love of music rekindled when she remarried and took up the piano again. "This lovely old gentleman called Gerry, who, at the age of – I don't know, at an old age – decided to learn the violin and he needed someone to duet with him. After Dad died … Gerry would say 'come on Jane, I need someone to play the piano," Claire said (Mother, Interview 1). Now Claire's mother plays the piano for Gerry, plays the organ at church, and for the past few years, she has also taken her grandson David to his weekly MELP. "They make a real party of it. They go to the café…get a piece of cake and a milkshake…That started when he was about four," Claire said (Mother, Interview 1) and the family returned to Australia to live.

At the time of the first interview for this study (March 2015), Claire's mother was still taking David to group keyboard lessons, and the cake parties continued to be the highlight of their week. Claire was not working, as she had taken time off to be at home with her second child, Harriet, who was nearly 1-year-old. Claire was taking her to a baby music group each week.

8.2.1 Fixing the past to move on with the present

Once back in Australia, Claire explains she decided to pursue music for David due to his interest; what she perceived to be a natural ability; and: "Just because I could," she says. Claire found a job and her mother was 'within arm's length' and able to do music with David on Wednesday

mornings, (Mother, Interview 1). Claire also felt her mother taking David, and later Harriet, to music was a way for her to forge a different musical relationship with her grandchildren than she had with her daughter. The weekly music time provided a way for Harriet's grandmother to 'fix' things, (Mother, Interview 1).

8.3 Music and everyday lives: a typical day for Harriet.

Claire drives the musical moments in her household most of the time, and while there is a 7 year age gap between the children, both spend a great deal of time sharing music with her and with each other. Each day begins with a musical interaction that involves both of them.

8.3.1 Music in the morning routine

First, there is the waking up song Claire has made up (Video Diary 277). Once awake it is time for morning keyboard practice. "David will turn on his keyboard before school, and then I flick on his CD so he can play along, and then hold Harriet and dance along to his music, so that's kind of the first music of the day" Claire explains (Mother, Interview 1). In Video Diary 42 Harriet laughs loudly when Claire begins to dance with her. David plays the keyboard along to the pre-recorded track (CD), and looks over his shoulder several times to watch them, with a broad smile on his face. Harriet smiles and kicks her legs to the music as Claire dances with her and Harriet claps her hands too. After music practice they get ready to go to school.

8.3.2 Music to accompany school drop off

Claire walks David to school most days, one of the appeals of living in a regional town. Music accompanies their journey through singing songs, playing with echoes in the tunnel they go through to get to school (Video Diary 318, 319, 334) and to accompany a quick swing in the park, both on the way to and from school. At these times Harriet is observed on a swing being pushed while Claire sings 'weee' each time she swings back and forth (Video Diary 361).

On occasions when they drive, music accompanies them in the car. This musical accompaniment ranges from classic rock such as Queen to nursery rhymes and the Wiggles CDs. Before David started school they used to drive to childcare. David used to request *Bohemian Rhapsody* by Queen for the drive, which was exactly the same length of time (eight minutes) that it took to get to childcare. "So we could just reverse down the driveway, put on *Bohemian Rhapsody*, and it would just be finishing" as they pulled up to childcare (Mother Interview 1, Interview 3). Harriet is not really into Queen the way her brother was. "I've tried to get her into the Queen album and she's just not there. She wants the wiggles and the nursery songs … the lightness. You know how they can be

boring sometimes. But those songs with, banjos and a violin that plays along on a jaunty jig or whatever it is… there's just something really delightful about that music and that's still her preference. I'm sure that will evolve" (Mother, Interview 3).

During the first interview (11 March, 2015) Claire said how she won the entire Wiggles catalogue of songs when David was a baby and they were living in Norway. As a result they listened to a "lot of Wiggles" (Mother, Interview 1) thanks to this win, and also because Claire "wanted to get some Australian music for him". During this first interview Harriet was not interested in the Wiggles yet, and Claire was secretly hopeful she wouldn't have to dig out her substantial Wiggles collection again. "I'm not sure if I want to, as I sort of feel like I've done the Wiggles… Maybe she just doesn't need to know" (Mother, Interview 1). Just over a year later, Harriet knows all about the Wiggles and every time she gets in the car that is what she requests. "I'm back in toddler land. So we're really into the Wiggles in the car. As soon as we get in the car she says 'on, on' and on means switch it on. She's often quite specific and will say 'Wiggles on'. So we listen to the *Wake up Jeff* album, which is okay. I was driving out to a meeting for work today without Harriet and I listened to the Wiggles the whole way. It wasn't until I parked the car that I just thought oh no" (Mother, Interview 3).

8.3.3 Music for home playtime

Once David is at school, Claire and Harriet return home and spend time playing and doing their chores. Music plays a prominent role during this time. Claire uses it to reinforce things Harriet is learning about, and also as a way to make mundane tasks more enjoyable. Claire uses a mixture of live music that she sings or invented songs she makes up to match an activity, through to CDs from her MELP and CDs from her own music collection.

Sometimes Claire will leave music on for Harriet to listen to, but more often than not, she too is drawn into the music and begins to interact and play musically with Harriet instead of cleaning or leaving her to her own devices. "Sometimes, I think, it's a pity to have it on while I'm cleaning the kitchen, and the baby's just sitting on the floor, not doing the actions at all, like not making it pedagogical enough, but yeah, there are a few songs in particular, like track twenty on here is *Sonata for flute, Minuet* by Bach, with dance instructions, and as soon as she hears it, she knows that if someone picks her up that we're going to start doing side to side and forward and back and down and round and round, and she really likes it, and there's a part where this American woman goes, 'quick, quick' and we do little running steps and she just laughs and laughs and thinks it's really great." (Mother, Interview 1).

Claire also spends time singing known songs from the MELP and traditional songs to Harriet. Video Diary 21 shows Claire and Harriet playing together and singing. Harriet is pulling toys out of her toy box and as she pulls out each one, an animal, Claire sings *Old MacDonald had a Farm* for the specific animal. In Video Diary 65 she is chewing on a toy sheep and Claire starts to sing *Baa Baa Black Sheep*. Harriet then starts pulling different animals out of the box and each time looks up at her mother to see what sound she will make. For each animal sound she smiles or laughs.

There are also video examples where Harriet is exploring freely during this morning play time, and Claire finds ways to weave music into the exploration. For example, Harriet is videoed playing with plastic containers in the kitchen, and because she is standing with her weight on the drawer it is moving back and forth. Claire starts to sing *Row your Boat* in time with the action (Video Diary 62 to 64).

In addition to the music making at playtime, Harriet also plays with musical toys. This is particularly so in the second half of the study. Her favourite toys seem to be a globe that sings songs from different parts of the world when you touch it with a wand, and a keyboard with a built in microphone. Over the course of the year Harriet is recorded listening to the songs played as her mother helps her touch the globe and Claire sings (Video Diary 110), through to touching the globe herself and listening to the songs (Video Diary 131), moving in time to the songs (Video Diary 132) and then singing along to the songs on her own. Her favourite seems to be *My Bonnie Lies over the Ocean*. In Video Diary 119, Harriet initiates singing this song at the dinner table without the globe, and sings it clearly enough that her brother starts to sing it back to her and says "that's what she's singing". Harriet sings it again, pitch-matching the start note of her brother and singing in close time and he adds at the end of her rendition "that was actually quite good" (Video Diary 119). The family cat is serenaded on more than one occasion on the microphone and keyboard (Video Diary 135) and also by singing a song about a cat in Norwegian *Lille Pussekat* (Video Diary 156). Claire noted in her home diary that Harriet "loves her toy cat" (Home Diary 15 May, 2016) and sang to it with great "affection" (Home Diary 14 May, 2016). The live pussy cat also enjoys special songs about ears and noses (Video Diary 137). More specific to play time, Harriet is seen in the home videos hiding in a cupboard, and Claire announces to the camera "we are playing peek-a-boo", she opens the cupboard door and sings "peek a boo" and Harriet smiles up at her, before sliding the door shut to play the game again (Video Diary 101). Over the course of the year Claire has recorded many moments like this, or moments where Harriet is playing with toy animals or reading a book and Claire sings a song about the animals, such as *Old MacDonald had a Farm* (Video Diary 20), *Baa Baa Black Sheep* (Video Diary 47), *Giddy Up Horsey* (Video Diary 22) to accompany a toy

horse, or *Nellie the Elephant* (Video Diary 66) to accompany a stuffed elephant and a dance together.

8.3.4 Music to accompany routines

Every day chores are also accompanied by music. For example, cleaning and food preparation are often accompanied by background music or singing (Video Diary 68). Once lunch is ready Claire uses music to encourage Harriet to eat (Video Diary 56, 57, 67, 69, 306) and to accompany their daily lunchtime routine. After lunch Harriet usually has a nap and Claire uses gentle music or singing to help Harriet transition to sleep (Mother, Interview 1). In Video Diary 29, Claire is holding Harriet while they sit on the on the floor listening to classical music. In other videos Clare and Harriet sit together in the nursery chair and read a song book together before nap time. Claire also uses singing to help with nappy changing time, singing what she calls "a transition song" (Video Diary 3) that Harriet knows and associates with nappy time. She also uses singing to help Harriet calm down and to comfort her if required during the day (Video Diary 4).

8.3.5. Music to accompany afternoon and evening rituals

When school is finished music play time continues, only this time it also includes David and his keyboard, glockenspiel, dancing or reading song books together. In Video Diary 41 Harriet laughs loudly and appears to be enjoying the playtime with her big brother. Other times he reads and sings songs to her (Video 309) such as '*There's a hole in my bucket*' and makes up silly voices to accompany each character. When he does his piano practise he happily shares the keyboard with her. In Video Diary 34 David is practising while Harriet is playing on the rug behind him. She begins to bop up and down to the music before she crawls over and to pull herself up on his chair and starts to play on the keys. David gives her a big encouraging smile and she begins to bop up and down while playing the keys with her left hand and vocalise along. Sometimes Harriet will play the keyboard by herself (Video Diary 193, 194) or the piano with her mother (Video Diary 51, 52, 53) and when her father gets home from work, he and David might dance along to Harriet playing on the keyboard (Video Diary 33).

Over the course of the study, as Harriet grew older, new evening rituals developed around musical play and dancing with her father. "We've been listening to quite a few of the [MELP CDs] in the living room, because at dinner time or afterwards she'll say 'on, Dad' so we just turn something on and she knows how to dance and she's really into dancing" (Mother, Interview 3).

Bath time routines are accompanied by singing and playing (Mother, Interview 1). Video Diaries 58 and 60 show how Claire incorporates known and invented songs in the playtime with the little plastic animals in the bath. Claire often provides running commentary of the toys that are part of bath time including frogs (Video Diary 152), crocodiles (Video Diary 234) and Humpy Dumpty (Home Diary 17 May, 2015). Harriet interacts musically with her mother, taking turns to sing lines in songs, pitch matching (Home Video 145), counting down, and placing the frogs in the bath during the song *Three Hippopotamus Sitting on a Rock* or *Three Speckled Frogs* (Video Diary 151, Home Diary 16 May, 2015). On some occasions she is observed singing to herself, making up tunes and stomping her feet in time to her own music (Video Diary 150). Harriet also loves to splash in time to the songs sung in the bath (Mother, Interview 2).

After bath there are teeth to brush, books to read (Vide Diary 283) and songs to accompany both (Video Diary 45) before bed. When asked if there was a special bedtime song or musical ritual Claire very strongly said no, she tried to be really quiet (Mother, Interview 1). However, as Harriet became older, songs were introduced. Claire started singing at bedtime and she noticed that Harriet was taking these rituals up and turning them into her own. "When she puts her dolly to bed she sings the lullabies that I sing for her. So that's just adorable" (Mother, Interview 3).

8.3.6 Music to accompany activities outside of the home

On the days when Claire and Harriet go to organised activities outside of the house they are often musical activities. Once a week Harriet attends a MELP and also a musical playgroup run by the local church (Mother, Interview 1; Interview 2). At the start of the study she attended both these events with her mother Claire. Six months into the study Claire's mother Jane took over the music group duties, continuing the pattern she began with David – the inter-generational sharing of music time.

8.4 Harriet's Music Early Learning Program: a description of her participation

Harriet's MELP begins each week with the families all sitting on the floor and catching up for five to ten minutes before the singing begins. Harriet's group was small and was held at the start of the week. Claire felt this resulted in it being more of a social experience for the women. "Because I'm at the Monday class, there are usually about three or four mums and bubs there at the moment and it's all mums" (Mother, Interview 1).

When the MELP begins, the group facilitator leads the families in a welcome song before commencing the regulatory activity where the parents bounce the children on their laps for 16 beats and then hold and squeeze them for eight minims. During the first observation visit (18 May, 2015)

Harriet was observed to respond well to this activity and smiled at having cuddles and squeezes with her Mum. At the time Harriet had been unwell, which meant her participation in this class was more passive than normal. She still participated by watching the other children dance with their parents, she appeared to listen to the music, participate in group dance activities in mum's arms and play with the scarves, which Claire said she enjoyed a lot at the moment: the sensation of the scarf on her face and playing peek-a-boo (Mother, Interview 1). However, Harriet's favourite thing was marching around the group circle in her mother's arms for 15 beats before the facilitator said stop. The squeeze routine was repeated and this was observed at the first Observation (18 May, 2015).

At the second observation session, Harriet was feeling better and was observed enjoying the MELP with her grandmother. After an informal start the class began with the group facilitator leading everyone in the *Bounce and Squeeze* song, followed by a welcome song that involved clapping and stomping to the music. Harriet was observed to do both independently and in time to the beat. The next song included tickles and cuddles with her grandmother, which she seemed to enjoy, before moving on to movement songs. This section began with Harriet's favourite activity: marching in time to the music before stopping for more squeezes. She was observed smiling throughout the activity. A hoop song followed, where they jumped in and out of their hoop and laughed together at the game. Then it was time for Harriet's now second favourite activity, the scarves. As the group facilitator walked around the room handing out the scarves Harriet ran along behind her. She finally got her scarf and brought it back to her grandmother, who said the colour and lifted it up and down in time with the sung instructions. Harriet swung her scarf back and forth in perfect time to the recorded music that was being played on a CD.

The group then followed a structured dance and Harriet's grandmother carried her for the song. They laughed together as they danced around the room, before returning to their spot for some quiet music and the *Goodbye song*. The time seemed to pass very quickly and Harriet and her grandmother were completely engaged in each other's company for the duration of the class, smiling almost constantly (MELP Observation 2).

8.5 Why Harriet attends a Music Early Learning Program: reasons parents provide for attendance at a MELP

8.5.1 MELP attendance to meet other mothers and socialise

Harriet was born some years after her brother David, and she was Claire's first child born in Australia. "I don't have a mother's club and don't have lots of friends who are having babies at the moment. So I wanted to just go and do something with her, and I thought, yeah, I'll go and hang out

and do Katrina's class (Mother, Interview 1)". Attending the baby MELP each week has allowed Claire to make new friends and acquaintances, and opportunities to socialise outside of the home. It has also helped her make new connections in her community. "One of the people at baby music has a daughter the year below David at school who started this year, and I've wrangled her into joining the P&C" (Mother, Interview 1).

8.5.2 MELP attendance to nurture a love and respect of music

Claire chose music for Harriet to attend as opposed to another mother-baby activity for two reasons: she had an established relationship with the music teacher; and she had a deep respect for music. When Harriet was born, David was already attending keyboard classes at MELP 3. From this connection Claire was able to meet families and socialise (as outlined in 8.5.1) and build a musical community. The choice of a musical community may have been influenced by the deep respect she has for music herself, and her desire to actively instil in her children a respect for music and its power. "I just hope that they both are people that really learn to appreciate music. I want them to …have that sense of amazement of how powerful music is (Mother, Interview 3)".

8.5.3 MELP attendance to provide opportunities for music engagement and learning

Claire has always been drawn to music. As a child she taught herself the piano and as a young adult she sang in a professional choir. She plans to learn the clarinet one day and if David starts guitar or banjo lessons in the future she may learn with him (Mother, Interview 1). Claire wanted to learn music as a child but due to a number of circumstances, including financial, geographic and emotional, she was not provided the opportunity. The complex feelings associated with music and specifically learning music clearly impacted Claire's mother's willingness to teach her daughter. Similarly, Jan was raised in a family where resources were scant, geographic isolation was real and emotional hardship was experienced by his mother (Mother, Interview 1), all resulting in no opportunities to attend music groups or learn an instrument. For these reasons Claire was determined that her children would attend music groups at a young age and have opportunities different to her own (Mother, Interview 1).

8.5.4 MELP attendance to build inter-generational connections

Soon after her return to Australia, Claire enrolled David into a MELP and his grandmother Jane took him to these classes when Claire returned to work. Claire reflected during the first interview how different this musical relationship that her mother has with her children is compared to the one she and her mother shared. "Totally different and I wonder if you asked her without me in the room, I wonder if she might be kind of fixing up things, I don't know"(Mother, Interview 1). Claire

acknowledges that times and opportunities were very different for her parents. "Mum and Dad were farmers. It was the 1980s, and they had the three kids. It's not as if they would've had time or money to be able to just go, 'you know what? I'm going to take off the whole of Wednesday afternoon, and drive into (town), so that you can have private music lessons, which you may or may not benefit from, that you might not enjoy'" (Mother, Interview 1).

With the birth of her second child, Claire took leave and did not return to full-time work. She attended some Wednesday classes with David and her mother, where she happily described herself as the third wheel. (Mother, Interview 1). The video diaries also show many moments of the children sharing music from their MELP at home with their grandmother. This includes listening to the CDs and dancing (Video Diary 102), singing (Video Diary 101, 103, 113), reading nursery books and rhymes together (Video Diary 113) and doing nursery rhyme games together. In Video Diary 126 and 127 Harriet is seen sitting on her grandmother's legs for a horsey ride. Harriet has instigated the activity and is clearly enjoying it. She laughs at the end and says "again" followed by lots of giggles. When her grandmother repeats it Harriet sings along in time to the beat. They repeat the game several times to the rhyme *Branbury Cross*. Jane and her grandchildren know the songs and are comfortable singing them together outside of the context of the MELP. Sharing music together at the MELP has provided a platform for sharing special time together both at the MELP, before and after in the weekly cake ritual they have built, and at home when they share music play time together.

8.5.5 MELP attendance to build on home traditions and rituals

Claire has built many music rituals in her home. Some of these are daily activities that have become rituals, and some of them she can see have the potential to be passed down through her children to their own children. She makes chores like piano practice fun by turning them into a family morning dance ritual (Diary Notes 7 May, 2015; 12 May, 2015). When not dancing, Harriet helps with practice (Diary Notes, 3 March, 2015). Family dance rituals have also become the way the family ends the day as Harriet gets older. "At dinner time or afterwards she'll say 'on Dad, Mummy, Dad, and Mummy'. And so we just turn something on and she knows how to dance and she'll really get into dancing" (Mother, Interview 3). This can be seen in several of the video diaries, where Jan is dancing in the dining room with David and Harriet (Video Diary 159), or Harriet is sitting on his shoulders while they sing and dance (Video Diary 159), or in his arms (Video Diary 169) always accompanied by a great deal of laughter and affection.

Daily rituals such as bath time, mealtime, dance time and sleep time are all accompanied by music (as outlined in Section 8.3.5).

8.5.6 MELP attendance to provide activities and ideas for home play time

Music playtime is almost like a ritual in this house. Claire finds ways to weave music into their games and play and also their downtime, times when there is no formal play. There is clear evidence of use of the MELP songs in the home, both played on CDs and through Claire singing them to Harriet. Most home diary entries include a reference to listening to the MELP CDs at least every few days. For example, Claire records in one week they use their *Kindermusik* CD to dance to on three separate days (11 May, 13 May, 14 May 2015) MELP songs are also sung by Claire daily, such as *Nelly the Elephant* (Video Diary 206) and some of the rhymes for cuddles and tickles (Video Diary 77).

Everyday experiences and moments are accompanied by song. For example, in Video Diary 72 a large huntsman spider is climbing the wall inside the house. Harriet is watching the spider and Claire starts singing *Incy Wincy Spider*. On another occasion a lady bug flies into the bathroom after bath time and Harriet watches it crawl up her arm. Claire sings a lady bird song (Video Diary 91 and 92).

8.5.7 MELP attendance to support child development

Central to the theme of using music actively in play at home is Claire's belief that music is good for children's development. In particular she uses music in play to support language development and movement skills as Harriet grows. Harriet loves to sing and dance and Claire supports her to do so in play each day. When watching Video 293 together, Claire reflected that she now felt Harriet drives the musical moments of play more now that she is older, but Claire is the one who starts the music off, when Harriet would be just as happy doing something else but Claire starts to sing and then music follows (Mother, Video 293). One of the reasons for this is it provides Claire an opportunity to get Harriet to sing with her as she believes these moments are good for Harriet to practise singing and speaking. Similarly, Claire believes moving to music helps children develop physical skills. There is a lot of dancing and moving in the home, and Claire was impressed when they were on a road trip and stopped for a break at a café, when Harriet starting doing complex physical moves to the song she heard on the radio (Mother, Interview 3).

8.6 Reflections on attending a MELP: the influence it has had on everyday life and parenting

Over the past year Claire has kept a total of 362 video diaries and submitted 21 written diary entries, all recording her family's interactions with music and in particular, the way that music is woven into everyday play time, together time and rituals. Claire has participated in three interviews,

and Harriet was observed at two MELP sessions, one with her mother and the other with her grandmother. Music plays a prominent role in the day-to-day life of this family, and is fundamental to the parenting of both Claire and Jan. It is clear that Harriet and her big brother David benefit from musical parenting, and it is difficult to distinguish at times between music in the home and music at the MELP as the songs, CDs and ideas from the MELP are interwoven into the fabric of their everyday routines and lives so well.

Over the course of the year, Claire has noted changes as Harriet has grown to the way she responds to music. When Harriet was a baby Claire said she responded more to the interactive nature of music, so most obviously to rhymes, tickle games and other songs where there was physical contact, eye contact and singing (Mother, Interview 1). Now Claire says Harriet has started responding more to the beat and the melodic contour of songs, and singing words to songs (Mother, Interview 3). "Lately she's had that sort of language explosion and she can repeat sentences…and that kind of speaking capability is flowing on into singing and so she's able to sing along with things and it's sort of been a bit amazing really in how many different songs she can sing along with and pick out words to (Mother, Interview 3)".

Claire says Harriet's favourite activities now include singing in the car to the Wiggles (Mother, Interview 3) and singing and playing her brother's keyboard at home. "She likes to sit at the piano without anyone else sitting there and play and sing. You know just bang her hands on the piano blah blah blah and then she'll turn a page of the book, and there has to be a book there open in front of her, and she goes 'mmm mmm mmm, hoot hoot dah" (Mother, Interview 3). Claire thinks it's the tuneful songs that she can sing along to that Harriet responds best to. In addition to her new found love of the Wiggles she also likes Play School songs with a clear melody (Mother, Interview 3). Claire says it is the simplicity of these songs that she is attracted to (Mother, Interview 3). Harriet also responds to beat and has become somewhat of a dancer in recent times. In some videos she combines both by playing the keyboard, singing and dancing in her seat all at the same time. At other times, she chooses automatic beats on the keyboard that she likes and dances along to (Video Diary 193, 228).

In Video Diary 134 Harriet is seen at David's keyboard exploring and pressing different buttons and changing songs and rhythms. When she finds one she likes she starts to dance in the chair, clapping her hands before turning the page in the music book and pointing back over her shoulder, in the opposite direction, to the music player. Claire asks if she should put the CD on and Harriet nods. Claire puts the CD track on that accompanies the particular song Harriet has opened at the keyboard and she begins to play along to the CD for a bit before dancing along in her chair at the same time.

As the song progresses, Harriet gets down and starts dancing on the floor. She bends her legs and then moves her hips side to side in time to the music. She is clearly having a lot of fun until the music stops, when she demands Claire play the song again and Harriet resumes dancing. David walks in to the dining room and joins in too. The songs stops and Harriet demands it be repeated, she does the same dance moves with the same big smile. David notes she's dancing to the beat, and Claire says "I know, clever girl!" The song is repeated again and again. David keeps dancing and playing with her in the musical moment.

On another occasion Harriet is recorded watching Playschool and some dinosaur songs come on. She sings along and stomps her feet and watches intently (Video Diary 140, 148). Playschool ends and she sings goodbye. Playschool has become a part of everyday rituals too with episodes accompanying afternoon tea (Home Video 115). Recently, the family made a road trip to a large capital city to see the 'Happy Birthday Playschool: Celebrating 50 years' exhibit. This experience affected the way Claire feels about the musical future of her children, her plans and her hopes for them. She wants her children to know and understand music, to feel it and be able to harness some of its power to express themselves when they are older, and to connect to their own feelings. After the recent road trip she has concerns living in a small country town may hinder her capacity to support and nurture this, and this affects her hopes and aspirations for her children.

8.7 The plan from here: Claire's hopes for her children's musical futures

When asked what the plan is for the children in the near future, Claire responds she will continue with music much the same for now. David will continue with private piano lessons, a transition he made towards the end of the study after completing two years of keyboard with MELP 3, and Harriet will continue attending the toddler MELP with her grandmother. David has shown some interest in the guitar, and Claire thinks that is something that will come (Mother, Interview 3). For now she plans for him to continue with piano lessons as saying: it is "such a great instrument to get started on anyway, but it's not something I'm going to push" (Mother, Interview 3). There were a couple of times during the study when David was losing interest in the glockenspiel and then keyboard, but Claire wanted him to continue. Jan was unsure about making David continue, concerned about pushing their own agenda onto their children (Mother, Interview 1). Jan feels strongly that music lessons must be something David wants (Mother, Interview 3). Claire subtly reminded David that he would miss out on 'grandmother and cake time'. Coupled with a new keyboard for Christmas, David continued happily with his MELP 3 program (Mother, Interview 1).

Claire says music is something that can support her children's early learning and lifelong education. But she also hopes they can love and appreciate music and its complexities, and support their

cultural identity as Australians and Norwegians, growing up in a country town. Claire hopes Jan can bring his culture into their home and lives through his music. When asked if Jan sings Norwegian songs to the children, Claire doesn't know. "Sometimes he feels inspired and puts on Norwegian [music] because he's got his particular albums and artists who he goes to, to make sure the kids are kind of ingesting some [Norwegian] culture. He occasionally will sing a nursery rhyme with Harriet but not so much, what he does is a bit more like rhymes with David. So not really musical, but it kind of has a bit of rhythm and is like related to music … the quirky funny stuff that appeals to kids around that age" (Mother, Interview 3).

Claire believes the quality and diversity of musical experiences the children are exposed to and the role models playing the music is very important. But she feels this is not easily achievable in a small country town. It is important to Claire that her children learn music from people who are themselves 'good' musicians and she is glad to have found this in her small town. For Harriet, Claire likes that her teacher "brings the energy" to her class (Mother, Interview 1) and is qualified in music. For David, she likes that his teacher is a "real pianist who can make a kind of grade one song sound really great" (Mother, Interview 1).

Claire feels the only restriction she has to sharing more musical experiences with her children is that they live in a regional town. At the time of the final interview I asked Claire if, in general, there were any things that restricted her from doing the kind of music activities or singing and making music with the children that she wanted. "If you had asked me this question a week ago I would have said no. I went to Canberra on the weekend and it was a real reminder of how kids in [small regional towns] and around – country kids – how much they miss out. I'm the sort of person that actually does go to stuff and I'm feeling like this is why kids don't do as well educationally in the country, because the sorts of things that you see on a Thursday evening when you're going out with your parents or on Saturday when you think 'let's go and do something' is just so much less involving and informative. So I think probably musically there are things we're missing out on that aren't even occurring to us. I'm sure I would be taking my kids to shows and workshops and interesting things that aren't available here if I was somewhere else" (Mother, Interview 3).

Claire feels small towns can't offer children the same level of quality in musical experiences or the diversity in exposure to different artistic, musical and cultural opportunities, saying there is no good orchestra near them. "When I was singing in what used to be the Melbourne chorale…we'd sing with the Melbourne symphony and they were just so great. The lead viola player at the time was also the concert master and he's now the concert master in the Australian Brandenburg orchestra or ACO. That was the kind of person you could see that they were quite a real person that had a life

and was also this (excellent) viola player. If you go walking on South Bank with your family then there'll be some professional classical musicians busking and then that's what the kids see as music… and what seems like real possibilities of well you can be so much better but when you're from the country, it sort of seems like oh but that's other people, not here you know. So there's that and I think just that sort of horizon of possibilities and what people imagine themselves to be gets shrunken when the people around you are sort of not valuing those things so much" (Mother, Interview 3).

To compensate for their small town status, Claire plans to include more visits to nearby cities to provide exposure to high quality music and art experiences for her children. Claire hopes that the extra trips to the cities, coupled with ongoing music lessons will provide her children musical ability and music appreciation as they grow up. "I hope they both are people that really learn to appreciate music. What I mean by that is that people who, whatever else is happening in their lives, can hear the music and aren't taken in by simple genre differences and marketing. I don't mean to privilege one genre above another, but that [they] can listen to say complex classical music or complex jazz and appreciate the music that is happening in that and not just say 'oh that doesn't sound very nice' or 'no I'm not into that. I only like guitars'. So that's important to me and I think it should be achievable for both of them to understand things like what's occurring in music when there's a change of chords, and why does this music make me feel this way? I want them to have that sense of amazement of how powerful music is, and to at least occasionally hear some kind of really great original seminal work like Beethoven and have that appreciation that this man was a genius. That this is nothing like most of the music I listen to, and maybe it doesn't have to be my favourite music but I can appreciate this has enormous power and intelligence and complexity behind it. That is something that most people perhaps can't even aspire to because it's far beyond the reach of most people. But being able to say 'wow that's really something'" (Mother, Interview 3).

8.8 Commentary to the narrative case study and conclusion

For this family, attending a MELP has provided a way for the parents to give to their children opportunities that were not available to them in their own childhoods. It has also provided ways to process complex feelings associated with music and learning that have been passed down the generations; and forge new inter-generational connections. These parents have been able to bond with, share and learn through music, together with their children, despite a formal lack of music education. They identify as musical and actively use music in their daily parenting.

Attendance at a MELP has provided ways to reinforce music and play in the home that is highly valued by these parents, and has provided many new resources, activities and songs to use in the

home. Music allows them to celebrate their cultures and embrace the social elements of the one in which they live. MELP attendance has helped them settle back into their community and meet people, as well as support them in their home learning and ongoing development. Music for this family provides ways to be together, to love together and to share special times together.

CHAPTER 9: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

9.1 Introduction

This study sought to identify and make meaning of the reasons why, and the ways in which parents invest in and utilise music in their 'everyday' lives as a result of attending a MELP. As stated at the outset of this thesis, the study was framed by the following research questions:

1. What reasons do parents provide for attending MELPs?
2. What do parents hope to gain by participating in a MELP
    a. for themselves?
    b. for their children?
3. How does participation in a MELP shape the way music is used at home?

9.2 Overview of research findings

The research findings in this study were presented through the methodological lens of narrative inquiry. The narrative case studies of five Australian families provide in-depth insight into their musical lives and journeys. By doing so, the study uncovers a number of reasons why parents invest in music for their children, demonstrates how these align with their own musical beliefs, identities, hopes for their children's futures, and their hopes for themselves as parents. This study also identifies a number of ways MELP participation shapes the ways music is used in the home. An overview is presented here, with details following in Section 9.3, where the findings are aligned with the research questions.

Parents in this study attended MELPs for four key reasons. First, they valued music; second, they had a strong belief that music helps children learn and supports early childhood development, particularly language, communication, social and emotional development; third, parents wanted to gain new ideas and resources to foster family closeness, including musical play time, family routines and rituals, and to support sibling play; and fourth to access social support in their local communities.

Many of the parental hopes were related directly to the reasons for attending a MELP and were value-driven. These included hopes for their children, such as childhoods filled with rich opportunities to learn and grow through music informally and later more formally through learning an instrument; and hopes for themselves. Parents hoped attendance at a MELP would help them learn new songs and gain new ideas on how they could use music at home to support learning, play and family time; and that they would meet people and make new friends.

MELP attendance shaped the way music was used in the home by providing structures and content (presented in well-planned and repetitious ways) that parents could emulate in their homes. Six MELP structures that supported parents to incorporate music as part of home routines, rituals and transitions, as well as for regulation and learning were: voice leading; using a large repertoire of songs; interacting via different musical modes; attuning to the child's needs and assisting with emotional regulation; using music to structure behaviour; and increased confidence to improvise in the moment. Parents used these structures strategically at home by singing. They then used song and music making and engagement for regulation and to scaffold learning. How they used these structures was shaped by their own childhood experiences of music, their sense of being a musical person, their identity as a musical parent, the ways in which they value music, and their belief of what being musical means.

9.3 Findings

9.3.1 Research Question1: What reasons do parents provide for attending MELPs?

Theme 1: High value for music

A theme central to all participating parents was that music was highly valued. This value was shaped by three difference forces: a direct result of positive experiences and memories of music in their own childhood; a lack of music exposure during their own childhood which they wanted to remedy; and the third paradoxically, was negative experiences with music early learning during their own childhood which they did not want to replicate with their children.

For Renee (CS01) and Clare (CS05) fond memories of music in their childhood shaped their value of music. In particular, for Renee, it was being sung to by her mother that she remembered. This reflects previous research (Custodero & Johnson-Green, 2003; Ilari, 2005) that found positive musical experiences of parents affected the way they used music in their own parenting. For example, parents who were sung to, especially by a mother, were more likely to sing as parents themselves (Custodero & Johnson-Green, 2003). Both Renee and Claire sing to their children as part of play, family routine and ritual, and now the children sing to their baby dolls as part of their ritualistic play.

Sarah (CS02), Karen (CS03) and Trisha (CS04) all reported little or no music exposure or education in their early childhood, therefore MELP attendance was important as it provided opportunities for their children to have an experience different to their own. For Sarah (CS02), financial constrains meant music lessons were not an option for her as a child, and geographic distance and isolation resulted in Karen (CS03) and Trisha (CS04) missing out on an early music education. Both these

families travelled some distance to get to their MELPs to ensure their children had different experiences from their own.

While Claire (CS05) had fond memories of music in the home, she was actively deprived of the opportunity to learn an instrument as a child. Thus one reason she attended a MELP was a conscious decision to change this experience for her children. She also hoped this early music experience would lead to music lessons as the children grew up.

All five parents identified as musical parents, however only Renee (CS01) and Claire (CS05) believed they were musical people. For them, MELP attendance provided support and reassurance for the ways that they were already using music in the home, and provided additional songs, ideas, games, resources and musical strategies to add to their home parenting, routines and family rituals. For Sarah (CS02), Karen (CS03) and Trisha (CS04) who did not identify as musical, or have strong memories of music in their own childhoods, attending a MELP ensured their children had the opposite experience to their own – a musically rich childhood. MELP attendance also provided these parents with practical ways to build music making structures that would support learning through play, and family engagement and bonding in the home.

These findings suggest parents do not have to identify as musical, or have experienced a musical childhood or music education to place a high value on music. None of the parents in this study had participated in formal music education. Only one parent pursued music as an elective in high school but all five families used music actively in the home and attended a MELP with their children each week and all five identified as musical parents. The value of music therefore, does not have to lie in the ability to perform it (McPherson et al., 2012; Rickard & Chin, 2017). Music is inextricably and fundamentally linked to our sense of self (MacDonald, et al., 2017), and becoming a parent presents a time when a person's sense of self, role and identity are changing. Parenting an infant can also present a musically enriched time in the parent's and infant's life (Custodero et al., 2002). The parent's life has the potential to be full of music within their parenting role and as part of a newly formed identity. Thus this provides rich grounds for Music in Identities (MII) to be formed (MacDonald et al., 2002). The way parents use music as a resource for fulfilling their parenting role, meeting the needs of their children, and as self-making during this time of transition are all markers of identity formation. This research supports the notion posited by Hallam (2017), that it is possible for music to be a central element of an individual's learning identity even if they are not a 'musician' in the traditional sense (Hallam, 2017).

Theme 2: Supports childhood development

All five sets of parents stated a key reason they attended a MELP was their strong belief that music helps children learn, and supports early childhood development. In particular, they felt music supports the development of cognitive, linguistic, communicative, emotional and social skills. All parents interviewed believed music was good for their child no matter what their current age or ability, and allowed the child to experience success. In addition to this, MELP attendance also supported the early intervention goals of both Natalie (CS03) and Angus (CS04).

Subtheme 2.1: Music to support cognitive development including numeracy, literacy and an ability to attend and comprehend through active listening

At the MELP, all the children were observed to participate in activities that supported early learning in numeracy, literacy, concept comprehension and active listening. These activities and songs were then emulated in the home. Parents identified they attended a MELP to learn new ways to use music in the home to support learning. Renee (CS01) felt music was valuable for her children because it allowed learning to occur in a fun and positive way. The skill of listening and attending to an instruction was raised as a benefit by all of the parents, who believed attending a MELP and learning how to listen to music, and also to instruction about the music improved this skill. Trisha (CS04) believed that MELP attendance helped Angus develop listening skills that often exceeded everyone's expectations and this helped him with school readiness for the start of preschool.

These findings are further illustration of previous research which supports the active engagement of parents and children in music making to improve developmental outcomes. Gerry and colleagues (2012) found infants who engaged in active music making with their parents had superior communication skills compared with infants randomly assigned to a passive music experience (Gerry et al., 2012). The ability to take these skills from the group to the home are supported by the outcomes of this research study. Williams and colleagues (2015) reported that children who engaged in shared music making in the home at aged 2-3 years had better developmental outcomes measured at age 4-5 years of age (Williams et al., 2015).

Subtheme 2.2: Music to support language development and communication skills

All families identified a belief that music was good for supporting the development of language and communication skills. For Renee (CS01) this was a primary developmental concern and reason for attending. Renee had concerns that Jessica's expressive language skills might be delayed, and she believed music would support her language development in a fun way. Attendance also supported Renee in her efforts to work in a strength-based way with Jessica, and use signs and actions to

participate and communicate while her language structures were still developing (Mother, Interview 1 and 2).

Karen (CS03) and Trisha (CS04) attended their MELPs to support their children's language and communication therapy goals. Both believed music helped their children communicate more easily and effectively. Music research supports this, with some studies documenting significant gains in language and literacy skills in pre-school aged children when musical curriculum is integrated within their preschool (Hallam, 2016).

MELP attendance was observed to support language development in the home for all of the children through the use of songs and games taken directly from the MELP and used throughout the day, as documented in written and video diaries. Pitt and Hargreaves (2017) reported that the benefits to speech and language skills were considered to be the most beneficial reason for children attending a parent-child music program in the UK. Similarly, Blackburn (2017) reported outcomes of a survey conducted with 125 parents in the UK that identified key benefits of participating in a music program. One of these was the belief that participation in musical activities promoted communication skills (Blackburn, 2017).

Subtheme 2.3: Music to support the development of emotional and social skills

Parents in this study identified that music was a fun way to learn and practise social and emotional skills. This is supported by Pitt & Hargreaves research that reported parents perceived attending a music group provided children an important opportunity to socialise in a group (Pitt & Hargreaves, 2017).

In this study, children were observed to participate in activities that required mastering social skills, and the ability to self-regulate emotions in their MELPs. For example, Angus (CS04) was observed to use music to relax. His mother told how he lies down on the floor, still and restful, when he hears quiet music, a skill she believes he has learned at his MELP (Mother, Interview 1, CS04). Parents also learned at their MELPs how they could use music, MELP songs and activities in everyday situations to help their children regulate emotions. This can be seen in the way Karen (CS03) uses singing at medical appointments to help Natalie stay calm; and Trisha (CS04) uses the bounce and squeeze regulatory activity to help Angus relax at school events.

Research suggests that engagement in music and movement classes assists children in learning and applying self-regulatory behaviours (Winsler et al., 2011). However, less is known about the ability of parent-child programs to support parents to learn about the importance of regulation in early childhood, and their role as parents to support this development. Music therapy literature supports

the use of music to empower parents to soothe their babies (Baker & MacKinley, 2006) and to socialise with their children in group settings (Burrell, 2011). However, few studies have directly investigated the impact of a group activity, such as a MELP, to support parents to learn ways to support their child's emotional and regulatory development. The only research that provides any comparison is that of Barrett (2009) that showed parents drew from their MELPS strategies to support their children emotionally, but did not identify what the strategies were.

Subtheme 2.4: Music as therapy

For two families, MELP attendance was more than 'music for development', it was therapy. Karen (CA03) and Trisha (CS04) enrolled their children Natalie and Angus in MELPS because they believed attendance would support the early intervention goals of their children. Both families also identified it was a time and activity in the week where therapy goals could be addressed in a strengths-based and fun way, with the parent spending a special and happy time with their child. For example, Karen spoke often during the interviews of the many mandatory appointments that Natalie had to attend. MELP time was fun, voluntary and filled with singing, dancing and instrument playing, all things that Natalie enjoyed. Karen felt this was a very special offering from the MELP (CS03). It was not arduous, and they experienced joy and happiness when they participated in the activities together. Such moments of joy may have positive implications for Karen's mental health, and Karen and Natalie's relationship, in addition to the therapy goals that are being supported through attendance. Similar findings have been reported in the music therapy literature, where Williams and colleagues (2012) reported on significant mental health improvements for parents of children with disabilities from group music therapy participation.

Family music therapy research has also documented how children with special needs can be engaged in therapy with their families, in both community and home settings to improve the child's functional abilities (Thompson 2012; Thompson et al., 2013) and the quality of the parent-child relationship (Oldfield et al, 2012). Thompson and colleagues (2013) reported that parent-child relationships grew stronger for families who participated in a family-centred music therapy program for children with ASD. Parents reported being able to interact more with their child in fun and positive ways, and they reported changes in how they perceived their children, with one parent reporting she was more able to see the child rather than the disability (Thompson et al., 2013).

Theme 3: To foster and enrich family relationships, family time and family rituals in fun and positive ways

All of the families in the study reported that they attended a MELP to learn resources such as songs, games and activities to use at home to foster and enrich their relationships, including parent-child

and sibling relationships. Family traditions were built around music and based on musical structures taken from the MELPs, and routines were imbued with music, as will be further discussed in the next section of findings. For this theme, a number of subthemes have been identified.

Subtheme 3.1 – MELP attendance as a fun time for parent and child to bond and play

All families identified that music time was fun. Going to a MELP together provided a way for parents to enjoy their parenting role. Sarah said music "makes parenting more enjoyable, especially if you've had a bad day at work" (Mother, Interview 3, CS02). Many families reported being busy and looked for ways to gain maximum benefit through participating in activities that could tick more than one box at a time. MELP attendance was good for the children (see developmental outcomes outlined above) and good for the parent-child relationship too. Trisha (CS04) identified being very busy, and time poor, and felt MELP attendance was a special time she kept each week for her and her youngest child. Similarly, Jessica (CS01) was also the younger child in her family and their MELP was the only time they spent without her older, more vocal and confident sister. For busy parents, time at home can get taken up with chores, as Trisha pointed out (Mother, Interview 1, CS05). MELP time may present a window for busy parents to be in the moment together with their child, in fun and musical ways that support positive interactions and nurture parent-child relationships.

Pitt and Hargreaves (2016, 2017) investigated parent attitudes towards group music making with young children and reported one attitude was that attending a music group was a fun thing to do (Pitt & Hargreaves, 2016, 2017). In the current study, parents were observed to make music both at the MELP and in the home, where they were observed to be having fun singing, dancing and making music. This was evidenced through smiles, laughter, and affection. This was often as part of a routine, such as bath time; a ritual, such as bedtime; or during playtime. This is further supported by research suggesting mothers sing to their children because it is fun and enjoyable (Creighton et al., 2013; Young, 2008).

Fun musical moments shared between the parent and child, both at the MELP and in the home provide opportunities for bonding and enriched interactions. These findings may build on the research of Custodero and Johnson-Green (2008), who reported that families used music for "bonding, interacting naturally and for family togetherness" in the home (Custodero & Johnson-Green, 2008, p.23). Music presented within a supportive and structured music program may provide a platform where positive parent-child interactions that are usually musical in nature can occur more inherently and with guidance from the music professional if required (Abad, 2011; Abad &

Edwards, 2004; Edwards, 2011; Edwards & Abad, 2016; Creighton et al, 2013; Nicholson et al., 2008; Williams et al., 2012).

Subtheme 3.2: MELP attendance to foster music play at home

All of the families said they attended a MELP to get new ideas for using music as part of play time at home, and all were observed using content and structure from their MELP in play time at home. This was observed through singing songs, free play with musical instruments, dancing to recorded music or playing musical games with parents and their siblings, and making music with instruments or through invented song.

These findings build on the current body of research that report links to music use in the home after participation in a music program (Pitt & Hargreaves, 2016; 2017) including singing (Young, 2007), music making (Young, 2008) and music play time (Nicholson et al, 2008). In particular, these findings extend the discoveries of Barrett (2009), who identified that MELPs can support family unity and strengthen roles and relationships in the home through musical play (Barrett, 2009, 2011). In Barret's research, one family identified that MELP attendance helped build their confidence to "really interact and play" with their baby (Barrett, 2009, p.123). The father reported how his music group provided him with a way to make a connection through play with his child. "You absolutely lose touch of playing with kids. And the music is a tool to help you play with the kids and introducing one-on-one with your children" (Barrett, 2009, p.123).

Subtheme 3.3 – Music to support and enhance sibling relationships

In this study, sibling relationships were observed to be nurtured through musical play at home, and this music was heavily influenced by the younger child who attended the MELP. Music time was observed as a special time for sibling bonding, sharing, playing and learning together. What was unexpected was the influence the younger sibling had on the older sibling's participation, by initiating the music and games, and directing the activities based on their MELP experiences. Older siblings were observed to nurture their younger sibling's involvement in music through expanding musical games, singing songs with them and supporting how the younger ones played within the music structure, but they were not overbearing or dominating in the musical play.

Previous research has documented older-on-younger sibling influence (Barrett, 2009, 2012; McPherson et al., 2012) but little is known about the influence of younger siblings on older ones. The findings of the current study contribute a new insight about ways in which traditional older sibling dominance may be reversed through MELP attendance. What was observed in relation to older-on-younger sibling influence was how the emerging musical journey into formal music

education of the older sibling influenced the musical play of their younger sibling. Both Angus (CS04) and Harriet (CS05) were observed playing with their older siblings' formal music books when the older siblings were at school. In the videos and diary entries they would make their own way to the keyboard, open the music book to a certain page, press the buttons to start the backing track and then hit the keyboards in an attempt to play the songs. This evolved into 'practising' the songs by playing them again before moving on to the next one (See Video Diary 181, Case Study 04 for an example). This suggests that the younger siblings are emulating the musical behaviours of the older ones, and that the music education of the older sibling is impacting on the emerging musical identity of the younger sibling.

Subtheme 3.4 – Music to support and create family routines and rituals

All the participating families identified a reason they attended a MELP was to access tools and resources, and in some cases, the skills to create their own music traditions or continue and build family routines and rituals in the home. This subtheme draws together the routines and rituals observed in the family homes, where music played a prominent role. This included morning wake up, afternoon and evening play and bed time preparation as rituals, and music as a part of chores, bath time, play time and car time routines.

Songs accompanied wake up transitions at the start of the day, and bed time rituals at the end of the day for each family. In the mornings, songs, both invented and traditional, were sung live by the mother, and used to gently wake and prepare children for their day (see Case Study 05 Video Diary 277). In the afternoons, Karen (CS03) and Claire (CS05) danced to mark the closing of the day and to transition into evening rituals, which included song singing for all families. For Natalie (CS03) her father joined in via Skype, or FaceTime if he was working away from home, to sing nursery songs as part of their preparation for bed routine. Natalie's father planned his work shift around this, to have a break in the campsite kitchen. All of the families sang songs at bed time. Renee (CS01) also read books prior to singing with her children and Trisha (CS04) played recorded music after singing while her children fell asleep. MELP songs were used for the bed time rituals of live singing for all families and also for Angus's recorded music. Prior to bed, Joseph's family (CS02) watched and sang along to songs they looked up on the iPad.

Research findings have reported the ways mothers use songs to maintain traditions, honour the past, and create new family traditions (Custodero, 2006; Hourigan & Byrne, 2010; Pitt & Hargreaves, 2017). Musical dimensions become a part of the daily routines of children and their families; marking time, and helping to organise their experiences through rhythm and temporal time (Adessi, 2009). Barrett (2009) reflected that music was "embedded in the rituals and traditions of love" in

the families she studied (Barrett, 2009, p.128). For the families in this study, music certainly was embedded in rituals and routines and traditions of love.

Theme 4: For parents to socialise - meet new people and build support networks

All of the parents identified social support as a reason for attending a MELP. Many parents enjoyed the opportunity to meet other parents and share experiences, and all felt socially supported through knowing likeminded people in a community setting. Many of the parents reflected on how busy they were and felt MELP attendance was particularly helpful, as they could meet the needs of their children and themselves in the one setting and timeframe. This is pertinent in light of Renee's hope that there is enough time for music and playtime both in the community and in the home (CS01).

During the interviews all of the families reflected on the social nature of the MELP or the friendships they had made through attending. For parents Renee (CS01) and Claire (CS05), the opportunity to meet other parents was a reason they chose to attend a MELP. Both of these women had recently relocated back to Australia and wanted to be in touch with other mothers. Each parent reported a personal connection with their MELP leader, and felt that they had built a caring and supportive space in their programs for parents to come together and build support networks of their own. For Sarah (CS02) it was a way to get out of the house, have fun, and share stories of Joseph's music making with her group leader and other parents. For Karen (CS03) and Trisha (CS04) MELP attendance allowed them to seek out the support of another professional who understood their childrens' needs and to surround themselves with other supportive families. Trisha described her MELP leader as "part of our extended family" (Mother, Interview 3, CS04), and identified her as someone she could trust as a role model for her children.

These findings build on the current research findings outlining a number of benefits for parents attending music groups, including social support (Barrett, 2009, 2012; Young, Street & Davies, 2007). Pitt and Hargreaves (2016) suggest socialisation in the music group may be multi-dimensional, experienced between the parent and their child, and then amongst the wider group (Pitt & Hargreaves, 2016). For the families in this study, social support for the parents was a key reason identified for attending a MELP.

9.3.2 Research Question 2: What do parents hope to gain by participating in a MELP for themselves, and their children?

Parent hopes were manifested in the stated outcomes and reasons for attending a MELP. These hopes, and their alignment to reasons for attendance, are summarised in Table 7. Parents were asked

what they hoped to gain by participating in a MELP for themselves and their child. All of the parents identified more readily their hopes for their children than hopes for themselves.

With regards to their children, parents hoped attendance at a MELP would provide an early childhood rich with musical experiences that would support them to go on and either learn a musical instrument, or appreciate music in adulthood as an art form, and use it to support recreation and self-regulation. Renee, Sarah and Claire all hoped their children would go on to learn a musical instrument after their MELP, while Karen and Trisha hoped their children would be able to use music as a strategy in the future to help them relax and be calm. Claire also hoped that her children would be able to experience beauty through music, and appreciate the complexities that make up orchestral music. In a longitudinal study which followed Australian children from the beginning of their music ensemble learning through to young adulthood, parent aspirations and support positively affected whether or not their children stayed engaged in learning their instruments. The study found that parents who wanted their children to "enjoy it and feel the benefits of music" had children who stayed engaged in formal learning for longer (McPherson et al., 2012, p.99). The parents in this study all alluded to future music learning as a way for their children to do something that would be fun and useful for their longer term educational outcomes.

All of the parents in this study hoped attendance at a MELP would improve their children's early childhood development. This hope may have derived from the parent's belief that music in early childhood is good for development. Parents also hoped attendance would support them (the parent) to help their children learn and grow by providing them with songs, ideas and resources to support musical play at home that would foster and support learning.

Similarly parents hoped attendance at a MELP would provide ideas, songs, resources and strategies to help them build and enhance family relationships, playtime, rituals and routines in the home. Barrett (2009) reported similar findings in her research, where families readily identified attendance at a music program had bolstered their home routines and rituals by providing them with a range of ideas and resources to use outside of the music room (Barrett 2009). Renee, Trisha and Claire all hoped attendance at a MELP would also support sibling relationships.

Parents attended MELPs with the hope they would meet new families and feel socially supported themselves, and Renee hoped her children would make new friends. This reflects findings of other research that identifies attending music groups provides a social context for the adults to network and make friends (Pitt & Hargreaves, 2016) as well as a space for the children to practice and improve their social skills, which may lead to forming new friendships (Burrell, 2011).

Table 7: *Summary of the reasons and hopes parents provide for attending a MELP*

	Reasons and hope in theme	Subthemes	Hopes
Theme 1	Parental high value for music	Shaped by positive childhood memories and experiences (01, 05)	Children learn an instrument (01, 02, 05)
		Shaped by lack of music exposure and opportunity in early childhood (02, 03, 04, 05)	
		Shaped by negative experiences with music in early childhood (05)	Aesthetic appreciation of music (05)
Theme 2	Child development	Cognitive development (01, 02, 03, 04, 05)	Support learning (all)
		Language and communication skills (01, 02, 03, 04, 05)	Improve communication skills (all)
			Learn new songs and games to support child development (02, 03, 04, 05)
		Emotional and social skills (01, 03, 04)	Use music to regulate and stay calm, during transitions and also as a strategy as the children grow (01, 03, 04)
			Use music for own listening please (04, 05)
		Music as therapy (03, 04)	Support early intervention goals (03, 04)
Theme 3	Foster and enrich family relationships, time, and rituals in fun positive ways	Music as a special fun time for parent and child to bond and play (all)	Share special time (02, 03) Have fun together (01, 02, 04)
			Learn new ways to use music in role of parenting (02)
		Foster play time at home (all)	That there is enough time to play (01)
			That there is enough opportunity in regional centre for exposure to new music and ideas to support play (05)
		Sibling relationships (01, 04, 05)	Play together (01, 04, 05)
		Music to support and create family rituals (all)	Morning wake up (01, 03, 05) Dressing (04 Meal time (05 Dance time (03, 05 Singing time (01, 02 iPad, 03, 04, 05) Bath time (05 Song books (02 iPad, 04, 05) Bed time (01, 03, 04, 05)
Theme 4	Social support for parent		Meet new people make new friends

			(01, 05)
			Access a community of likeminded people for support (01, 05)
			A space to relax (04)
			A space to be supported by the music professional (01, 02, 03, 04)

9.3.3 Research Question 3: How does participation in a MELP shape the way music is used at home?

MELP participation shaped the way parents used music in the home by providing a mechanism for them to learn and adapt music repertoire and activities to suit their personal styles of parenting and levels of experience with music. The predictable and repetitive structure of the MELP, along with the varying content supported them to rehearse and practice the songs and activities at the MELP, and then use them strategically in the home. This meant they used songs and musical games and activities learnt at the MELP to support play, learning, transitions, behaviour management, emotional regulation, routines and rituals in strategic ways that supported their parenting role. What parents took from the MELP and how they used it was shaped by their own childhood experiences of music, their sense of being a musical person, their identity as a musical parent, the ways in which they value music, and their belief of what being musical means.

For parents who identified as musical, the MELP provided affirmation and clarification. These parents reported that MELP attendance provided a time each week where they could check in with their group leader and affirm what they were doing at home. They could clarify through asking questions, or they could gather new ideas, or simply be reassured that they were doing similar activities well at home. For example, Sarah said in her interview that attending a MELP gave her an opportunity to compare what she was doing at home, and know it was similar to her group leader, so she felt confident she was using music well at home.

For parents who did not identify as musical, it provided education and expansion to their existing skills. These parents reported that sometimes they were unsure of how they could use music at home, so MELP attendance gave them access to a range of new ideas and resources to provide innovative ideas for using music at home, and an expert they could turn to with questions. For example, music was not something Trisha would think to use readily in her day-to-day parenting before she attended her MELP, and it was watching the impact of a MELP leader on the children at her parents' group, that made her want to know more. Prior to this, Trisha had not felt comfortable singing, but after years of attending her MELP she feels more comfortable singing with her children

and does so often. She also finds the CDs from her MELP useful at home (Mother, Interview 3, CS04).

These findings build on earlier research by Barrett (2009, 2011, 2012, 2016a, 2016b, 2017) who reported that parents draw from the skills and knowledge they develop at their MELPs into their own parenting work (Barrett, 2009). While other research has also reported similar findings indicating home music use was enriched after attending community music groups (Pitt & Hargreaves, 2016, 2017; Young, 2008), none have identified why or how this occurred. This study specifically identifies why these parents attend a MELP and how their beliefs and values impact directly on what they take from the program. How this occurs is identified by specifically analysing the structures from the MELP that were replicated in the home.

9.3.3.1 Structures of the MELP that facilitated transition of music making into the home

Structure 1: Voice leading

Parents in this study all reported that the use of live music that was voice led, or recorded music that was voice led supported them to sing more at home. Voice leading was used throughout sessions for singing, and also dancing, playing instruments, exploring story books and relaxation time. Families were observed to emulate the voice led strategies at home. For example, Renee sang songs from her MELP to support musical playtime at home that was fun, engaging and educational for her children. She reported that MELP attendance supported her to learn more songs and then sing them confidently at home (Mother, Interview 1 and 4, CS01).

In addition, the MELP facilitators also provided information about activities, including explanations about what they were doing musically and the benefit of this for the child developmentally. This information was given both incidentally and intentionally throughout the sessions, as well as through personal conversations before and after groups.

Structure 2: Repertoire

MELP attendance provided parents with access to a wide repertoire of age and developmentally appropriate children's songs each term that they could then use in the home. These songs were used in play time (for example, see Case Study 01 and 05), daily routines (see Case Study 01 and Case Study 03), family rituals such as bed time (see Case Study 05) and also to assist with learning new information (see Case Study 02).

Structure 3: Modes of interaction

MELP attendance provided parents with examples of different ways to interact with their children musically. Parents were observed at home singing songs, dancing to live and recorded music, playing musical instruments together, adapting known songs for use in daily routines such as bath time, inventing their own songs, and sharing special time between siblings. These were all musical strategies that had been demonstrated in the MELPs.

Structure 4: Greater capacity to attune to the child's needs and assist with emotional regulation

MELP attendance helped parents learn how to observe and attune to their child's needs. The act of making music can heighten our abilities to listen and respond to others. The MELP provided a mechanism for parents to become more aware of these skills and practice them, looking for subtle signs in body language, facial expressions and musical expression that indicated to them how their child was feeling. Such observations helped the parents to then attune to their child's needs at music and match this, as facilitated by the group leader, by responding with music that matched mood (heightened faster paced music for excitement, quieter slower paced music for relaxation) during the MELPs. The presence and active participation of the parent in the MELP was paramount for this to occur. The parents identified that by staying in the sessions, they were able to observe how the MELP facilitator attuned to the children and then emulate this using music as the tool at home.

The MELP facilitator also provided very specific activities and instructions to help parents attune to their children and then use music to help with emotional regulation. All of the parents commented on the usefulness of this in their day to day parenting (see Case Study 03 and 04 for further examples). All of the families used the quiet time from the MELPs at home to help their children transition to rest and / or sleep times at night.

Structure 5: Better use of music to structure behaviour

Music songs, games and activities from the MELP were observed in the home to help structure behaviour. In particular, parents were observed to use music to transition from one activity to another, and to use specific MELP songs, like the 'tidy up' or 'pack away' song. These were adapted for use in activities of daily living too, such as hopping out of the bath or getting ready to brush teeth. MELP songs were also used for bed preparation. The other area this was most observed was music to transition to and from the car, like putting on seat belts (see Case Study 04) and then to keep children amused and happy on long car trips (again seen in Case Study 04).

Structure 6: Increased confidence to improvise in the moment

Many parents in the study reflected on how they felt they were always busy and having to balance a range of extra-curricular activities with school, work and home life. MELP attendance seemed to be an activity that parents enjoyed attending with their children, for the fun and structure, and also for the ideas it provided to help music play at home. As outlined earlier, this included the planned and structured use of music to support learning, however, MELP attendance also seemed to support parents to use music in free and improvisatory ways that provided a focus of being together in the moment. This time was a shared time that was special and creative, free from over- scheduling or organised play. The use of music in the MELP that was reactive to children and improvisatory in nature seemed to increase parent confidence to use music in similar ways in the home. For example, Clare used improvisatory music games to play with the bath toys with Harriet, and to share special cuddle time on the couch (see Case Study 05).

Parents were observed in the home, via home visits, video and diary entries, using music with their children in ways that were spontaneous, responsive to the moment, often delighting in the moment, and creative. These live music moments were interactive and appeared enjoyable to both the parent and the child (or children when siblings were also involved). Making music spontaneously requires confidence and belief in one's own musical ability and self, and this was observed in this study.

9.3.3.2 Strategic use of MELP structures in the home

This study has identified six key structures that parents took from their MELPS into their homes to support their everyday musical parenting. Analysis of video and written diaries, interview transcriptions and MELP observations further identified three strategic ways parents did this to support specific parenting or learning moments.

Strategy 1: Singing

Singing was a strategy all parents took from their MELP and used at home. If the parent was already a confident singer, they identified that MELP attendance gave them a wealth of new ways to use their voice and songs in their parenting. All parents were observed to sing in the home, car, and community. They were observed singing as a means to interact, bond, and engage with their child; and play, teach and calm their child. Thus songs were used for play, chores, transitions, rituals, routines, behaviour management, and emotional regulation. Songs from the MELPs (both original compositions plus traditional songs) were observed in use in their homes.

Parents reported that their MELP leaders were confident singers. I observed that they were all trained singers with correct vocal pedagogy and technique to lead with their voices. I observed that they used this training to connect, via singing and engage with others, rather than to perform. Their ability to use their instrument in this way supported parents to use their own voices, especially if they were lacking confidence to sing. Parents then took these skills of connecting with their children via singing into their own homes. For example, Renee was observed singing song books with Jessica even though she identified in her interviews that she could not sing. She was observed singing confidently and Jessica was observed smiling and interacting with her mother (Case Study 01). Trish did not identify as a musical person and was originally cautious of singing as she felt she wasn't good enough. She reported that MELP attendance had built both her confidence to sing with her children and her repertoire of songs to sing. She sang at home with Angus for play and learning, and also to settle him at night for sleeping (Case Study 04).

It was evident from observation site visits each MELP leader had the pedagogical training to use their voice not only to lead, but also to transition children from one activity to another. For example, each MELP facilitator used a 'tidy up' song, usually sung in minor 3rd or a simple perfect 4th introductory interval to grab attention, and then step-by-step melodies to encourage the children to put away their instruments at the end of each section of the session. The facilitators used pacing to hold, prepare and allow children time to rehearse for change, including suspended chords on the guitar, held melodies, vocal pauses, specific rhythms that 'pushed' children along towards tidying up and then slowed to relax when the job was finished. Parents would join in singing and MELP leaders often explained how music can be used as a cue to change jobs and gently prepare the children for this upcoming change. All of the parents in the study identified using singing to help their children transition from one activity to another, one event to another, or one place to another. Also, each family used the 'tidy up' song from their MELP to teach their children how to clean up toys at home.

Research shows singing can enhance emotional attachment between a parent and child (Malloch & Trevarthen, 2009) as well as bolster learning in the home (Barrett, 2017 in press). In addition to this, research demonstrates singing has positive mental health outcomes for mothers (Baker & Mackinlay, 2006; Creighton, 2013; Custodero et al., 2003). Being able to take from a MELP increased confidence to sing at home has the potential to improve the mental health of parents, build relationships and improve early childhood learning. A MELP can provide a robust experience of successful, attuned interplay, through singing and musical engagement in a safe and fun context that can be transferred into the home without risk of burden to the family. Barrett (2017 in press) reflected that joint singing functioned as a vehicle for one family to strengthen their social and

emotional ties, and helped parents teach their child about her world. MELP attendance could be one way of bolstering such interactions.

Strategy 2: Music for regulation

Activities in the MELP were designed to model regulation of impulse and behaviour. This was seen in the MELP facilitators using music making, music listening and musical activities to support both the children to learn to wait, and the parents to learn how to get the children to wait their turn, or control their impulses. During the sessions, the MELP facilitators were observed to provide ongoing commentaries and information to parents about what they were doing and why, as well as ways this could be incorporated into home play. The parents of young children and toddlers were actively involved in these musical moments, while the parents of older children had more of an observational or support role. These teachable moments were achieved through singing a range of songs that identified or influenced emotions, and playing musical games and activities, that were voice led, and required the children to stop, listen, wait, anticipate and control their emotional responses, to regulate their feelings and control excitement. Even toddlers and babies were observed participating in these games, in the music group with their parents, such as peek-a-boo games and stop-start games on the drums. Parents were observed in their musical parenting outside of the MELPs using the same songs, games and strategies to help their children handle emotions in a range of contexts and settings, such as sharing toys, playing at other people's houses, having to wait a turn, or having to be patient in a situation.

Parents reported using music, including singing that they had learned or modelled from their MELPs, to regulate mood and emotion when at home. Singing was used by all as a strategy for soothing and calming their children, particularly at bed time (see Case Study 4), or in situations that provoked anxiety in the child (see Case Study 3). Each MELP included a section towards the end of the program where families would relax to music. One program used recorded music and encouraged the parents and children to lie down and relax while listening. The other two programs used live music and improvised singing and guitar playing to match the mood in the room and change if required via entrainment to a calmer mood by altering their pace, timbre and melodic contour. Again, instruction was provided throughout sessions explaining what the leader was doing and how parents could use singing in a similar way at home to transition and regulate.

While there is some research on the use of music to support children to learn how to regulate their moods and emotions (Winsler 2011), most of this pertains to the child being taught by the teacher, either in a music or pre-school setting. Attending a MELP that is designed to include teachable moments on how music can support regulatory behaviour may provide a space for parents to learn

about the importance of self-regulation in gentle and practical ways through music to teach and reinforce this skill development in their child at home.

Strategy 3: Music to scaffold learning

All of the families in the study drew heavily from the MELPs to scaffold learning in the home, as seen in the home videos, diary entries interviews. Music was intertwined seamlessly into incidental and planned learning opportunities. In particular, MELP activities including the songs, games, instruments, and dances were used by parents strategically to support the children to learn about their environment, concepts, sounds, numbers, colours, body parts, spatial awareness, as well as new words. Early music awareness and skills were also taught in the groups and strategies provided to parents to continue musical development in the home. Research supports these findings, with a number of studies identifying parents who attended a music program used music from their program strategically in the home to support learning (Barrett, 2009, 2011, 2016a; Abad & Barrett, 2017; Nicholson et al., 2010; Pitt & Hargreaves, 2016, 2017).

9.4 Conclusion

This study sought to understand the reasons why parents attend MELPs, what they hope to gain by attending, and how attending shapes the way they use music in the home. I did this by conducting a longitudinal study of five Australian families over the course of 18 months to two years that studied their attendance at a MELP, their reasons and hopes for attending, and the ways in which attendance shaped their home music making. I conducted surveys and interviews with the families, observed MELP sessions, and viewed and coded home diaries and videos to create these narrative case studies that addressed the research questions.

By doing so, I identified four key themes for the reasons parents attended MELPs, and what they hoped to gain by attending, and six MELP structures that parents emulated in music making in their home. How they used these structures was shaped by their own childhood experiences of music, their sense of being a musical person, their identity as a musical parent, the ways in which they value music, and their belief of what being musical means. This reveal of complexity of the intimate relationship between the role of childhood memories and how these impact on the parents' valuing of musical experiences, their musical identity and beliefs demonstrates the complexity of musical heritage.

Parents in this study invested in MELPs because they valued music. Believing it is good for early childhood development, they wanted to bring music into their homes to support learning and nurture family relationships and togetherness, and because they see music as a social event for

themselves as well as their children. By investing in music early, these parents hoped they would enrich their children's lives with music experiences, and through this instil a love of and respect for music for life. They hoped their children would go on to learn instruments and use music to provide support to themselves through relaxation, recreation and regulation when they were older. They also hoped that through active participation in MELPS they would learn new ways to use music in their homes, to enrich family time, learning opportunities and build family traditions together. Finally, parents hoped that by attending a MELP they would meet other families to grow their social circle. Participation in a MELP met these hopes for parents.

For all of the participants in the study MELP attendance empowered them to use music more in the home by providing structures they could then use strategically. This included using content and songs learnt at the MELP to support play, learning, transitions, behaviour management, emotional regulation, routines and rituals in strategic ways that supported their parenting role. The combination of predictable structures with rich content, accompanied by expert knowledge of music pedagogy, early childhood development and the effects of music on parent-child relationships and early childhood development, created a powerful blend for shaping the ways music was used in the home.

CHAPTER 10: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

10.1 Introduction

This study has presented the musical stories of five families through narrative case studies, and in doing so has reflected on the reasons why they attended a MELP and the way MELP attendance shaped their use of music at home. In particular, it has identified the beliefs and values that may underpin parent decisions to attend MELPs, and explored the structures parents take from their MELP into the home to use strategically to support their musical parenting.

This research has demonstrated that MELPs provide a mechanism by which parents practice and learn songs, activities and musical strategies that can be used in their musical parenting at home. MELPs also provide a social support network through access to a professional music teacher or therapist, and other parents from the community. Thus the design, content and facilitation of the MELP are important elements that support parents in their musical parenting, whether the parent identifies as musical or not. This research has reinforced the previous findings of Barrett (2009, 2011, 2016a, 2016b, 2017 in press) and identified new emerging themes that warrant further research. Furthermore, it provides benchmarks in best practice that can now be used to inform practice and policy. These recommendations are outlined.

10.2 Recommendations for practice

Parents consistently reported that the sequential yet repetitive structure of the MELP they attended was key to bringing the music home. This approach allowed the parents to firstly rehearse 'how to' within a predictable and well supported framework at the MELP before taking the ideas home. Age and developmentally appropriate song and activity selection at the MELP was also important. MELP attendance therefore supported parents to use music at home by providing age appropriate repertoire, music activities and resources presented within a framework that was easy to learn and repeat at home. For these reasons, my recommendations for practice are:

10.2.1 Practice Recommendation 1:

That practice guidelines be established to guide the design and implementation of MELPs to ensure they are sequential in design. This will support parents to practice and master new songs and activities to then take home. The content and structure of the MELPs in this study seemed to be paramount to the transition of music from the group to the home. For this reason, guidelines that inform design and structure would be useful for all music programs. This structure would be

sequential to support development, rather than 'thematic' or over saturated in terms of stimulation and visual presentation, and sensitive to the needs of the children thus flexible within a predictable structure. Currently there are no guidelines in Australia as to what constitutes a Music Early Learning Program.

10.2.2 Practice Recommendation 2:

That MELPs are facilitated by staff who have tertiary qualifications in music. The way that the MELPs in this study were conducted seemed to impact on how successfully music was taken up in the home, as this impacted on parent confidence to take the songs and ideas and readily use them. The facilitators of the MELPs in this study were either music therapists or music teachers, who understood the pedagogy of music, as well as child development. Research has identified that people who do not have adequate training in music pedagogy may not lead appropriate music groups for children (Pitts & Hargreaves, 2016, 2017). In this study, MELP leaders used their voices to lead, not perform, to hold and transition, and to contain the group. They used song selection and repertoire of activities carefully to reflect and engage the developmental needs of the children in predictable yet flexible ways.

The use of live music and voice led pedagogy in the MELPs in this study were identified as key structures that supported parents to use music in the home. Recent changes to the ways that we experience music as a society are leading to high levels of music listening and passive participation (McPherson et al., 2012). The use of recorded music to engage with children should not replace the live and intimate interactions of an adult and a child when they make music together (Macauley &Welch, 2016). An overuse of recorded music in commercial programs may not support the research outcomes that show music making and music engagement through singing and sharing live music moments are the best ways to support parent-child relationships and child development.

10.3 Recommendations for policy

Parents identified four key reasons for investing their time and money in a MELP and what they hoped to gain by attending. While some of these reasons were tied with identity, others were related to belief systems that may have been informed or influenced by popular reports of neuroscientific research that shows music participation is beneficial for children.

Internationally, there has been increasing recognition of the importance of early year's education as well as the value of arts education for all children (Barrett et al., in press). In line with this, the Australian Early Childhood sector has also experienced significant policy and practice change, embracing a *National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care* since 2012

(Council of Australian Governments) and the implementation of a national framework for the early childhood sector from 2009: *Belonging, Being and Becoming; The Early Years Learning Framework* (EYLF) (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), 2009). Music is sparsely mentioned within this framework.

Parents invest thousands of dollars in MELPs each year. It is a paradox that the early childhood sector has codes of standard and practice across seven areas, including educational programme and practice, and is subject to high levels of regulation (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), yet music programs conducted in community and childcare sectors are completely unregulated. For this reason, I make the following policy recommendations:

10.3.1 Policy Recommendation 1:

That guidelines are established and standards of practice set for MELPs. In the absence of national guidance or music curriculum for the 0-5 ECE sector, the provision of music education is at the discretion of individual childcare centres (Suthers, 2004, 2007, Nyland et al., 2015) or business owners in the community sector. Barrett and colleagues believe that "music should be an integral feature of policy and practice in the early years, both in its own right and also for its power to support young children's wider development at home and in(to) school" (Barrett et al., 2016). As per my first practice recommendation, government guidelines would help to set a minimum standard of practice for MELPs conducted in community settings. This research has identified clear structures that could be used to inform these standards and set a high benchmark for practice, ensuring parents can invest their time and money in quality programs.

10.3.2 Policy Recommendation 2:

That a code of practice be established for people who conduct MELPs. Similarly, a code of practice would ensure that all people registered to provide MELPs adhered to a high standard of practice when working with children and their families. This could be overseen by a professional body such as the Australian Music Therapy Association, the Australian Society for Music Education, the ARACY network, or an appropriate government department, such as the Department of Training and Workforce Development or the Department of Education and Training.

10.3.3 Policy Recommendation 3:

That minimum standards be set for the training and/or qualification of people conducting MELPs. Minimum standards in regards to qualification should be implemented to ensure people running MELPs have the appropriate level of training in music pedagogy. This study supports the findings

of previous research that an understanding of music pedagogy and theory is necessary in addition to an understanding that music is good for children, to conduct appropriate music programs. For this reason I recommend this minimum standard be a degree in music or post graduate training in music and early learning or therapy.

10.4 Recommendations for research

Parents in this study attended MELPs for four key reasons, and some of these have been previously identified in the literature (Barrett, 2009; Pitt & Hargreaves, 2016; Young, 2008) and are outlined in Chapter 9 subsection 9.2. In addition to these, the following emerging themes were identified that were not readily available in the literature reviewed for this study, and thus warrant further research.

10.4.1 Research Recommendation 1:

That the effects of MELP attendance on parent mental health be further studied, in particular reference to 'busy' and time poor parenting. Parents in this study reported that one of the reasons they attended a MELP was because it met many needs at once. Parents could meet their needs for socialisation while their children's developmental needs were being addressed. For example, Renee (CS01) made new friends at her MELP while her concerns for her daughter's communication skills were supported and addressed. Parents could spend special time with their children while also having some time out from their busy day and relaxing listening to music. Trisha (CS04) felt this was an important part of the week for her – the relaxation time at music where she got to spend a few minutes lying with Angus and relaxing. This is particularly pertinent in a society where parents are feeling time poor, due to the many demands of modern day parenting (Abad, Shoemark & Barret, 2015; De Vries, 2009) and the possibility that this may effect parent mental health in negative ways. Further research into how music supports busy families by meeting their identified needs is warranted, including if MELP participation provides them with time efficient ways to engage with and teach their children at home, and if this has an impact on parent wellbeing. Further, research into whether making music with their children impacts positively on parent mental health is justified.

10.4.2 Research Recommendation 2:

That the potential influence of younger siblings on older siblings' music experiences is examined through the lens of MELP participation. For the families in this study with siblings, music time was a special time for bonding, sharing, playing and learning together. Younger siblings were observed to be influential on the musical experiences of older siblings by selecting MELP music and games that the older siblings then listened to and played. Older siblings were influential on the music

experiences the young child had in regards to the quality of the music time. Older siblings were seen to nurture music time by expanding musical games, sing songs and support their little brothers and sisters to learn and play within the music structure. Further research is warranted to investigate the effects of younger siblings MELP attendance on older siblings' music exposure and play at home.

10.4.3 Research Recommendation 3:

That the capacity for parents to learn and facilitate self-regulatory behaviours with their children be studied. The MELPs observed in this study had clearly designed structures that provided opportunities for parents, as well as children, to learn about self-regulatory behaviours. This was firstly modelled through regulation of impulse and behaviour, and second taught to the children and then the parent simultaneously. This was observed in all groups, from babies through to pre-schoolers. In the younger groups the activity was clearly explained and demonstrated to the parent. With older children, the MELP leader would do the activity with the children, and often give them instructions, then while the children were doing or preparing to do the regulatory activity, they would explain to the parent what they were doing and why. For example, the song *Sleepy Bunnies* was used to practice self-control, impulse-control and therefore emotional regulation. The children were instructed to lie on the floor and listen to the music and words, and wait for the music to liven up with bright strumming patterns and the words "wake up little bunnies". At this point the children would jump and hop in time to the music. While they were lying down waiting, the MELP leader was observed to explain to parents how she was going to 'hold' the music, by using suspended chords and long notes to make the children wait a little bit longer each verse before they were given the instruction to jump up. This kind of scaffolded learning was observed many times. Parents were told what the MELP leader was doing and why so that they could take this information home and use it.

The MELP seemed to provide a unique space for parents to learn how they can teach and support their children to master regulatory behaviours. There seems to be little research on this, with most of it describing how kindergarten programs teach the children, but not the parent, or parenting programs that might teach parents but without the children present. I believe this is an exciting space that warrants further research to identify how these moments occur and if and how the parent then takes this information back into their home and everyday lives.

10.4.4 Research Recommendation 4:

That musical identity and musical parenting be further examined, and relationships between the two researched. There are clear benefits for parents and their children when they participate in making music together. This study has suggests that if modern day parenting practices are changing the ways that parents and children make music and how parents identify musically, a MELP may provide a space where parents feel comfortable to identify with their musical selves, and this musical self may be in the role of parenting, rather than as a musical person. Participation in the MELP may empower parents to use more music in their homes. Barrett (2009, 2011, 2017 in press) has demonstrated the role of MELPs in the formation of musical identity for children. However, this is an area that has not been explored for parents to date.

10.4.5 Research Recommendation 5:

That families from a wider range of social and cultural backgrounds be included in MELP studies. MELPs such as the three outlined in this study are user pay. This immediately limits universal access to the programs. The participants in this study were all Caucasian married parents with a high degree of education. Further research could explore if the MELP model is effective at empowering and supporting parents to use music in the home from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Research into the structures that support musical parenting across a wider range of families is warranted.

10.4.6 Research Recommendation 6:

That the role of technology to support the transfer of music from the MELP to the home be studied more specifically. Further research is warranted to identify if digital music and resources can provide a supportive role when transferring the MELP experience to the home. This is paramount in light of the evidence that music experienced receptively or through digitisation without a parent does not have the same beneficial outcomes for children as music that is shared live and interactively. With technology changing so fast, digital music and devices will likely continue to play a strong part of making music in the home. Research is needed to investigate the long term implications of this on child development and parent-child relationships to ensure these changes enhance rather than replace parent-child musical interactions.

10.5 Conclusion and final thoughts

This research study has presented the stories of five families, and made meaning of their reasons for attending a MELP, including a better understanding of what they hoped to gain by attending and how this shaped music making in the home.

In these modern times, the benefits of music are more widely understood from both a health and learning perspective. This coupled with the accessibility of music and technology has the potential to open music access to many more families. It also has the potential for the magic that is making music to be lost to receptive listening or digitisation. The MELP provides a space where music making and interacting can be celebrated and embraced, where parents can bond with their children and explore their musical identities within their role of parenting. In this space, they can sing and make music without fear of judgement, or concern for a lack of formal music education. They can be supported to get in touch with their biologically driven desire to sing to and make music with their children. To be human is to be musical. MELPs support parents to be musical, to be creative and confident in their musical parenting and to actively use a resource they are predisposed to but may not have the confidence to use.

10.6 Epilogue

It has now been just over four years since I started this research project. During this time I have shared in the lives of these five families, crafted their stories, and listened to their hopes and dreams for their children. I have watched with constant awe the powerful role that music plays in bringing families together to bond and grow; how it can support parents to love their children and provide community links to other families. I have also watched the children grow up and move from babies and toddlers to young children setting off on their own musical adventures. I have watched as parent hopes have been fulfilled. At the time of writing, Nora, the big sister of Jessica now sings in a community choir, as Renee had hoped she would. Jessica sings all day long and speaks well for her age. She enjoys music at home and at church and will start school in six months' time. Joseph is now learning the guitar at his new school and is very proud that he is the youngest child to ever have guitar lessons at this school. He has started his preparatory year and plans to be a rock star when he grows up. His mother's hopes were that he would learn the guitar but only if it was fun. Joe loves learning the guitar and says it is very fun.

Natalie and Angus both started their first formal year of schooling this year as well. Natalie is attending a support unit at her local mainstream school. She still loves to dance and make music at school and home. Her favourite thing to do is play the drums at school. Karen believes her affinity

for music, and ability to use it to feel calm has helped her transition smoothly to school (Mother, Phone Interview 4, July 2017). Natalie uses an iPad to communicate at school and has recently started weekly horse riding in addition to music, and loves both equally. Angus attends the same mainstream school as his big brothers, and has settled in nicely. He loves music and his teacher, who Trisha describes as "a male version of Katrina, just taller" (Mother, Phone Interview, August 2017). While they still face daily challenges, Trisha feels Angus is enjoying life and learning, and she continues to use music to bolster both.

Harriet has graduated to the preschool music group at her MELP and is enrolled in a kindergarten program at her childcare centre. She enjoys participating in imaginary play and music time both at home and at childcare. She combines the two by making up songs about her imaginary games or to accompany them. She then adds rhythm and melodic contours and pitches that reflect her made up characters. For example, the dragon will be loud and slow, while the fairies are soft and high. Claire describes Harriet as a real 'doer' who loves to sing, dance, climb and swim. Claire still enjoys dancing at home with her children, and supporting her older son in his piano practice. This year David has started learning the chanter, and introduction instrument to the bag pipes. Claire feels it is a great reflection of his personality and character that he chose such an unusual instrument (Mother, Phone Interview, July, 2017).

For me, the personal and professional journey of this study has been immense. My own child has changed so much over the course of the study. No longer a small child, I have relished watching her musical-self develop. Music is an important part of her emerging identity and shapes her social circles, as she sings in a community choir and plays in a string ensemble at school. Her friends are people who love to sing and express themselves creatively like she does. I have also reflected on my own musical parenting during the study. Even though my child is no longer a baby, I continue to identify as a musical parent. We interact musically every day. My musical parenting role is more functional now. I play the piano while she plays her violin, we both sing her choir pieces together, or I accompany her singing. I support her practice, I drive her to rehearsals. We sing together in the car or take turns choosing music to listen to on our way to the rehearsals. These shared musical moments play an important role in defining our mother-daughter relationship.

Music also helps shape her relationship with her father. Sadly he became very ill during this study, and they spent many hours listening to and sharing music experiences together while he was recovering from surgery and treatment. During this time, I drew heavily on music and my musical identity to support myself as my roles in the family changed from wife to carer, supporter to provider. Music nourished my soul when I needed it most, and provided me company late at nights

when I couldn't sleep. It continues to give me hope that the future will be bright and inspires me to strive each day to be the best that I can be. Because when I am, I support not only my family, but many other families in the community through their MELP attendance.

I continue to identify proudly as a musician, a music teacher and a music therapist. I continue to offer hundreds of families' access to the highest quality MELP I can through my business, and I constantly reflect on what I offer and look for ways to improve this. This research has shaped my thinking in so many ways, and reinforced my beliefs that parents are their children's first and most important teacher and that my job is to support them in their musical parenting. Parents are drawn to sing and dance and play with their children and well informed MELPs support this.

I will continue to provide a MELP that supports parents to sing to their babies, and meet their emotional needs through music presented in multi-modal ways. There are always more questions than answers, more opportunities to learn, and more opportunities to share this knowledge with others. This four year journey is really just the beginning for me: the beginning of a lifelong career asking questions and researching the answers so that I can continue to enrich the lives of many through providing greater insights into the ways music supports family wellbeing and early childhood development. It is an exciting time of questioning and troubling and striving to provide the best for families by identifying the ways in which we, the music professionals, can support them to be musical parents in their everyday lives.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Gatekeeper letter

School of Music

PROFESSOR

Margaret S. Barrett
Head of School

The University of Queensland
Brisbane Qld 4072 Australia
Telephone (07) 3365 3513
International (07) 3365 3513
Facsimile + 61 7 3365 4488
Email: music@uq.edu.au
Internet: www.music.uq.edu.au

Being and becoming musical: towards a cultural ecological model of early musical development.

Musical parenting and musical play: strand 2

Professor Margaret Barrett (Chief Investigator)
School of Music, The University of Queensland

Dear [Music Early Learning Program Leader,]

I write to seek your assistance in facilitating the data collection processes in a national study of early musical development. This study aims to increase our understanding of music development in young children's lives and the ways in which family and community participation contribute to this development. The findings of the research will inform the development of early learning programs for children in family, community, and educational settings. The study is funded by the Australian Research Council.

Study description

(Child's name) is currently participating in this study. One of the study procedures involves observing this child as s/he participates in your Music Early Learning Program. We seek to document this participation through video and field notes. (Child's name) is the focus of the research and all observation data collected will focus on her/his activity only. It is possible that your other children involved in the program may be captured incidentally on any video footage data. These data are for documentation purposes primarily. Should the research team seek to use this footage in presentations images of these participants will be pixilated to conceal identities.

This study has been cleared by one of the human research ethics committees of the University of Queensland in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's guidelines (approval number 2013001040). You are of course, free to discuss your participation in this study with project staff (Professor Margaret Barrett contactable on email: m.barrett@uq.edu.au; tel 07 33653514; fax 07 33654488). If you would like to speak to an officer of the University not involved in the study, you may contact the Ethics Officer on 07 3365 3924.

You may indicate your consent for this data collection to occur in your program by signing the attached consent form and returning it in the enclosed post-paid pre-addressed envelope. Alternatively, you may fax the form to the number above.

\Yours sincerely,

Professor Margaret Barrett.
Chief Investigator.

Being and becoming musical: towards a cultural ecological model of early musical development.
Musical parenting and musical play: strand 2

Professor Margaret Barrett (Chief Investigator)
School of Music, The University of Queensland
MELP Leader Consent Form

Purpose: - This study aims to increase our understanding of music development in young children's lives and the ways in which family and community participation contribute to this development.
Duration: - The study will take place over one year (2014) and include the collection of observation data via video and field notes in my Music Early Learning program (approx. 4 times).
Procedures: - I understand that I am asked to grant permission for this data collection to take place in my Music Early Learning Program.
Risks: - I understand that there is a minimal risk that I and other children may be captured on video although these individuals are not the focus of the research.
Benefits: - I understand that my participation will provide valuable information concerning young children's musical development in family and community.
Confidentiality and privacy: - I understand that: my confidentiality will be maintained through the use of pseudonyms and the fictionalization of identifying personal details in any written reports arising from the project; cross-references from pseudonyms to real names will be kept in a password-protected file on a secure server at The University of Queensland**;** I may grant permission for some video-footage of the project participant's music activity in my program to be presented as a component of conference presentations to the research community and that all images of non-participants will be pixilated to conceal identities; all data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the School of Music at The University of Queensland and/or in password-protected files on a secure server at The University of Queensland for a period of 5 years, after which it will be destroyed.
Voluntary participation: - I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary. I may choose to withdraw from the project at any time without effect or explanation. Should I wish I may also withdraw any data contributed to the study at that time.
Contact details: - I understand that should I have further questions in relation to this project I may contact Professor Margaret Barrett (email: m.barrett@uq.edu.au; tel 07 33653514; fax 07 33654488).
Feedback and results: - I understand that I shall be forwarded a summary of any publications arising from this study.

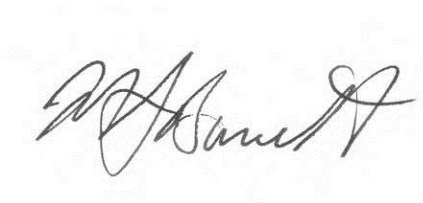
This study has been cleared by one of the human research ethics committees of the University of Queensland in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's guidelines. You are of course, free to discuss your participation in this study with project staff (Professor Margaret Barrett contactable on email: m.barrett@uq.edu.au; tel 07 33653514; fax 07 33654488). If you would like to speak to an officer of the University not involved in the study, you may contact the Ethics Officer on 07 3365 3924.
The procedures and ethical implications of this study have been fully explained to me and I give my informed consent to participate in this research:

Interview Participant:

Name:…… Signature:……..

Date:……

Chief investigator:



Name: Professor Margaret Barrett: Signature:

Date:……

Appendix B: Parent Participant Letter

School of Music

PROFESSOR

Margaret S. Barrett
Head of School

The University of Queensland
Brisbane Qld 4072 Australia
Telephone (07) 3365 3513
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Internet: www.music.uq.edu.au

Being and becoming musical: towards a cultural ecological model of early musical development.
Musical parenting and musical play: strand 2

Professor Margaret Barrett (Chief Investigator)
School of Music, The University of Queensland

Dear [Parent,]

I write to invite you to participate in a national study of early musical development. This study aims to increase our understanding of music development in young children's lives and the ways in which family and community participation contribute to this development. The findings of the research will inform the development of early learning programs for children in family, community, and educational settings. The study is funded by the Australian Research Council.

Study description

Should you agree to participate in this study you will be asked to contribute information concerning your child's musical activity over an one year period (2014) period approximately. Specific activities that you will be asked to undertake include:

1. Completion of a self-report (survey) concerning your musical experience and that of your child when you commence the study and at completion of the study.
2. Participation in a series of interviews during 2014 (3 in total). These interviews are designed to explore your history of music engagement and that of your child, document your child's current music engagement, and record the ways in which your child's music engagement develops over the year. The interviews will be conducted at a mutually convenient time and date, audio-recorded and transcribed. You will be asked to review the transcription of the interview to ensure that it is a true and faithful record. You will have opportunity at this time to make any corrections, deletions, and/or additions that you consider necessary and appropriate.
3. Invite a member of the research team to observe your child as s/he participates in the Music Early Learning Program in which s/he is currently enrolled.
4. Completion of a week-at-a-glance diary that records in brief your child's musical activity.
5. Video-record your child's musical activity in the home and family. You will be given a video-recorder to facilitate this activity. You have complete freedom to decide what to record and when to record. Recordings might include your child's participation in singing, playing instruments (formal as well as home-made), dancing, listening, inventing songs and instrumental music. You may review these recordings prior to submission of these to the research team.

We are aware that the data generation activities outlined above involve a time commitment and are grateful for your willingness to assist in these in order to collect this valuable information concerning children's musical activity and development.

Ethical considerations

It is possible that you might feel uncomfortable during the interviews. Should this occur you may stop the process at any point. You have complete control of the video data collection and may review and edit this as you choose prior to submission to the research team. You may choose to withdraw from the project at any time without effect or explanation. Should you wish you may also withdraw any data you have contributed to the study. Every effort will be made to protect your anonymity including use of a pseudonym, fictionalisation of personally identifying data, and labeling transcripts (audio and written) with pseudonyms. Should the research team seek to use any video-data featuring your child engaging in music activity your permission will be sought and you will be asked to review and approve the specific footage to be used. We ask that you consider the sharing of small amounts of video footage as this provides valuable evidence to the research community. Such footage will only be used in conference presentations and all audiences will be required to refrain from recording that footage. The video footage will not be made available through any other means of presentation.

All data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the School of Music at The University of Queensland for a period of five (5) years, after which it will be destroyed. Cross-references from pseudonyms to real names will be kept in a password-protected file on a secure server at The University of Queensland. Electronic data will be kept in password-protected files on a secure server at The University of Queensland. The transcripts of your interview will be made available to you for comment and/or amendment and you will receive a summary copy of publications that arise from this study. I would greatly appreciate your commitment to and participation in this study.

This study has been cleared by one of the human research ethics committees of the University of Queensland in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's guidelines (approval number 2013001040). You are of course, free to discuss your participation in this study with project staff (Professor Margaret Barrett contactable on email: m.barrett@uq.edu.au; tel 07 33653514; fax 07 33654488). If you would like to speak to an officer of the University not involved in the study, you may contact the Ethics Officer on 07 3365 3924.

You may indicate your consent to participate by signing the attached consent form and returning it in the enclosed post-paid pre-addressed envelope. Alternatively, you may fax the form to the number above. Should you agree to participate in the study, on receipt of your signed form I shall contact you to arrange the initial interview.

You will be given a copy of the signed consent form to retain for your own records.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Margaret Barrett.
Chief Investigator.

Being and becoming musical: towards a cultural ecological model of early musical development.
Musical parenting and musical play: strand 2

Professor Margaret Barrett (Chief Investigator)
School of Music, The University of Queensland

Parent Consent Form

Purpose: - This study aims to increase our understanding of music development in young children's lives and the ways in which family and community participation contribute to this development.
Duration: - The study will take place over one year (2014) and include participation in no more than 3 interviews (approx. 45 minutes in duration), completion of a self-report of music experience (at study commencement and completion), observations of my child participating in a Music Early Learning Program,, completion of a week-at-a-glance diary, and my involvement in collecting video footage of my child's music activity in the home and family at my discretion over the duration of the study.
Procedures: - I understand that I will participate in three interviews, complete a self-report (2), invite the researcher to observe my child in her/his Music early Learning Program, and collect video footage of my child's musical activity. I understand that I will be asked to review transcriptions of interviews and may review and edit the video-footage prior to submission.
Risks: - I understand that there is a minimal risk that I might feel uncomfortable during the interviews.
Benefits: - I understand that my participation will provide valuable information concerning young children's musical development in family and community.
Confidentiality and privacy: - I understand that: my confidentiality will be maintained through the use of pseudonyms and the fictionalization of identifying personal details in any written reports arising from the project; cross-references from pseudonyms to real names will be kept in a password-protected file on a secure server at The University of Queensland**;** I may grant permission for some video-footage of my child's music activity to be presented as a component of conference presentations to the research community and that I will be asked to review such footage prior to granting my approval; all data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the School of Music at The University of Queensland and/or in password-protected files on a secure server at The University of Queensland for a period of 5 years, after which it will be destroyed.
Voluntary participation: - I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary. I may choose to withdraw from the project at any time without effect or explanation. Should I wish I may also withdraw any data contributed to the study at that time.
Contact details: - I understand that should I have further questions in relation to this project I may contact Professor Margaret Barrett (email: m.barrett@uq.edu.au; tel 07 33653514; fax 07 33654488).
Feedback and results: - I understand that I shall be forwarded a summary of any publications arising from this study.

This study has been cleared by one of the human research ethics committees of the University of Queensland in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's guidelines. You are of course, free to discuss your participation in this study with project staff (Professor Margaret Barrett contactable on email: m.barrett@uq.edu.au; tel 07 33653514; fax 07 33654488). If you would like to speak to an officer of the University not involved in the study, you may contact the Ethics Officer on 07 3365 3924.
The procedures and ethical implications of this study have been fully explained to me and I give my informed consent to participate in this research:

Interview Participant:

Name:…… Signature:……..

Date:……
Chief investigator:

Name: Professor Margaret Barrett: Signature:
Date:……

Appendix C: Self-report survey

THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA

Date: ☐☐ ☐☐ ☐☐
Family ID ☐☐

Being and becoming musical
Parent survey
Thank you for agreeing to participate in the *Being and becoming musical* research project. The project aims to increase our understanding of music development in young children's lives and the ways in which family and community participation contribute to this development. This survey will help the researchers to understand how music is used in the daily life of your family.
When you have completed the survey, please place in the pre-addressed postage paid envelope provided.

About The Way You Use Music With Your Child

1. Thinking about the last week, how often have you…?

(Tick one box for each question)		Not at all	Once or twice	3 - 6 times	Every day
a.	Played recorded children's music at home for your child?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
b.	Sung with or to your child?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
c.	Sung action songs with your child?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
d.	Played a game or used toys with your child for at least 15 minutes?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
e.	Attended a music early learning program (e.g. *kindermusik*, do-re-mi, forte)	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
f.	Danced to music with your child?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
g.	Played an instrument with your child?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
h	Made up your own music with your child?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
i.	Made up songs with your child?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
j.	Listened to popular music with your child?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
k.	Listened to classical music with your child?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
l.	Listened to children's music with your child?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4

2. How much would you agree with the following statements…?

	(Tick one box for each question)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a.	I know lots of different children's songs	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
b.	I know how to use music to sooth and calm my child	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
c.	I know how to use music and play to help my child develop new skills	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
d.	I know how to use music to manage my child's behaviour	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
e.	I feel very confident about using music with my child	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5

About You

3. What is your gender? Female ☐1 Male ☐2

4. What is your age? _____ years

5. Are you currently… (tick one box only)

Single ☐1 Married ☐2 Separated ☐3 Living with a partner (de facto) ☐4

6. What is the highest year of schooling that you have completed?
(tick one box only)

No formal schooling	Primary school	Part of high school	All of high school (completed Yr 12)	Undergraduate degree	Postgraduate degree
☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6

7. What is your *main* source of income? (tick
(tick one box only)

Salary or wages (you or your partner)	Centrelink payments	Other
☐1	☐2	☐3

8. What is your employment status?

Part time	Multiple jobs	Full time
☐1	☐2	☐3

9. Do you identify as Aborginal or Torres Strait Islander? Yes ☐1 No ☐2

10. Are you from a non-English speaking background? Yes ☐1 No ☐2

11. What is the main language spoken at home?

……

About you and music

11. Have you ever learnt a musical instrument, taken singing lessons, or sung in a choir?
Yes ☐1 No ☐2

If you answered yes,
a. please describe which instrument/s and the length of time you studied

_____

If you answered yes,
a. Do you still sing / play your instrument?

Not at all	Now and then	Every week	Every day
☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4

12. Do you have any formal qualifications in music? Yes ☐1 No ☐2

If you answered yes,
a. please list those qualifications

_____

_____

13. How often do you listen to music?

Not at all	Now and then	Every week	Every day
☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4

14. Do you ever use music to change the way you feel? Yes ☐1 No ☐2

If you answered yes,
a. please list the ways in which you do this

_____

_____

15.	**In general, do you feel that you are:** (tick one box for each question)	**No, not at all**	**Rarely**	**Some-times**	**Often**	**Yes, very much**
a	Very good at keeping your child amused	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
b	Very good at calming your child when he /she is upset or crying?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
c	Very good at keeping your child busy while you are doing other tasks? (like housework)	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
d	Very good at the routine tasks of caring for your child? (e.g. feeding, changing nappies etc)	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5

About Your Child (study participant)

16. What is your child's first name? _____

17. **Is your child?** Female ☐1 Male ☐2

18. **What is your child's age?** _____ years; _____ months

19. **What is your child's birth order** First Second, Third, _____

20. **How many children do you have?** _____

21. **Is your child Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?** Yes ☐1 No ☐2

22. **Is your child regularly exposed to a language other than English at home?** (by you, other family, carers or babysitters) Yes ☐1 No ☐2

23. **Does your child have a developmental concern or delay?** (e.g., delay in learning to walk or talk; challenging behaviour) Yes ☐1 No ☐2

If you answered yes,
a. please describe the condition or developmental concern

_____

Appendix D: Interview schedule

Study 1 Musical parenting and musical play

Interview schedule current MELP participant (interview 1)

Family history of music engagement (parent/care-giver)

1. What is your earliest recollection of music in your life?
2. How did you and your family use music as you grew up (prompts – listening to music alone/together, singing alone/together, playing instruments alone/together, making up songs alone/together, jamming or improvising alone/together, attending concerts alone/together, playing/singing in school or community ensembles or choirs, other)?
3. Where did your family encounter and use music as you grew up (daily rituals such as driving, cleaning up, brushing hair, family celebrations, church and worship events, music early learning programs, community events, school events, other)?
4. Thinking over the uses of music we have talked about what role/s do you think music played in your family as you grew up?
5. Would you describe yourself as musical? (if not – would you describe any-one in your family as musical?)
6. What makes some-one musical (prompts - skills, knowledge, innate ability)?
7. What can you recall of your music education (prompts - classroom music, instrumental lessons, ensemble experiences, community music experiences)
8. How long did you engage in music education (prompts - formal/informal/non-formal)?
9. How have you used music throughout your life (prompts – as stress relief, as mood changer/enhancer, as company/comfort, as community activity such as ensemble or choir participation, other)?
10. How do you use music now in your life?

Current engagement, beliefs and values

1. What prompted you to enroll your child in this MELP?
2. Who usually takes your child to this MELP? (prompts – self, grandparent, friend, etc)
3. Would you describe what happens in your child's MELP (prompts – singing, moving, playing instruments, story-telling, listening to music, making up music).
4. Which of these experiences does your child respond to most? How? Why?
5. How do you use these experiences in your music making in the home?
6. What do you hope these experiences will do for your child?
7. Please describe the ways in which you currently engage with music with your child/children (prompts – listening to music, singing, making up songs, playing instruments, making up your own music, dancing, other)?
8. What music is found on the musical soundtrack of your home (prompts – classical, popular, children's music – sub-genres of all of the above with specific artists named)?
9. What music resources do you use in your home (prompts – CDs/DVDs, MTV, instruments, home-made instruments, other)?
10. How else and where else does your child encounter music (prompts – in child-care, with siblings, with relatives beyond the immediate family, with baby-sitter, in a MELP, other)?
11. What can you tell me of the types of music engagement that happens with these others?
12. How often would your child encounter music (prompts - hourly, daily, weekly)?
13. Would you describe a typical day in your child's musical life (prompts –music when waking up, music in the morning, afternoon, at feeding times, child-care, at bathing times, other ritual activities)?
14. What effect does this music engagement have on your child (prompts – enhances mood, calms down, other)?
15. What music/music-engagement experiences does your child respond to most readily (prompts – specific genres of music, specific songs, types of activity (such as dancing/singing), places and settings, other)?

16. How would you describe your child's music-making currently (prompts – responds readily, has clear preferences, responds to specific elements such as beat, rhythm, melody, dynamic variation, other).

Future

1. How do you plan to use music with your child over the next year?
2. How does this differ from your own experience in family? Why?
3. Why is music important to your child's development?
4. What will you be looking for in your child's musical development?

Interview Schedule 2 and 3

Follow-up interviews

1. Since we last spoke what has been happening in (child's) musical life?
2. What have you noticed about the ways in which (child) responds to music (prompts – responds readily, has clear preferences, responds to specific elements such as beat, rhythm, melody, dynamic variation, other)?
3. Are you beginning to notice any particular preferences in (child's) engagement with music (prompts - specific genres of music, specific songs, types of activity (such as dancing/singing), places and settings, other)?
4. Thinking about (child's) musical engagement who is the person who has most responsibility for this (prompts – you, partner, siblings, relatives, child-carer, other)?
5. What sorts of things does this person/s do with (child)?
6. Looking at the video footage I noticed….what can you tell me about that (prompts – what was happening before/after, why did you choose to video that, what does it tell you about (child's) music engagement/development, other)?
7. Reading the weekly diaries I noticed that…what can you tell me about that (prompts – songs/music listed, settings, in which singing/music-making occurs, people with which singing/music-making occurs, (child's) mood)?
8. Are there any things that restrict opportunities for singing/music-making with (child) (prompts – time, resources, skills and knowledge, people available, other)?
9. What are your plans for the next 6 months?
10. What are your hopes for (child's) musical development?

Appendix E: MELP Observation Form

PhD Field notes – observations
Date: MELP:
Family: MELP leader:
Step 1: raw field notes (typed up)

Section of session	Notes / details	codes/ prompts

Appendix F: Record of video footage for research participant:

Name Family ID:

Data register number	Name / ID number of video Explanation / Description of video content	Downloaded from DB into data file
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		

Appendix G: Weekly Diary

Being and becoming musical: towards a cultural ecological model of early musical development
ARC Project 2013 – 2015, Barrett & Welch

Your name:.....

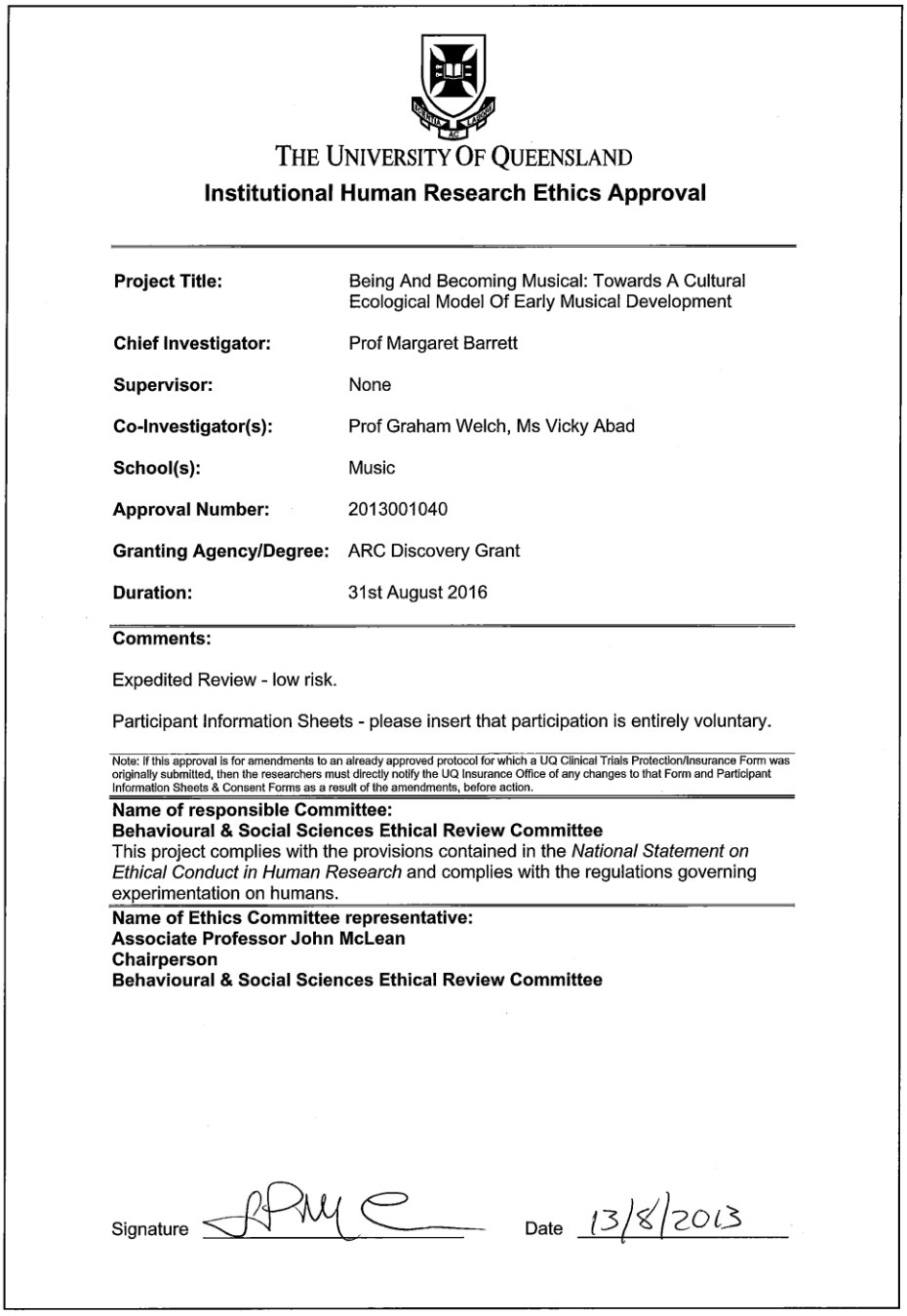
Child's name:.....

Week commencing (date):.....

Day of the week	Musical event	Those present	Place	Child's emotional state/mood
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				

Appendix H: Ethics Approval

Ethics Approval granted on the 13th August,



THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

Institutional Human Research Ethics Approval

Project Title:	Being And Becoming Musical: Towards A Cultural Ecological Model Of Early Musical Development
Chief Investigator:	Prof Margaret Barrett
Supervisor:	None
Co-Investigator(s):	Prof Graham Welch, Ms Vicky Abad
School(s):	Music
Approval Number:	2013001040
Granting Agency/Degree:	ARC Discovery Grant
Duration:	31st August 2016

Comments:

Expedited Review - low risk.

Participant Information Sheets - please insert that participation is entirely voluntary.

Note: If this approval is for amendments to an already approved protocol for which a UQ Clinical Trials Protection/Insurance Form was originally submitted, then the researchers must directly notify the UQ Insurance Office of any changes to that Form and Participant Information Sheets & Consent Forms as a result of the amendments, before action.

Name of responsible Committee:
Behavioural & Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee
This project complies with the provisions contained in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* and complies with the regulations governing experimentation on humans.

Name of Ethics Committee representative:
Associate Professor John McLean
Chairperson
Behavioural & Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee

Signature _____ Date 13/8/2013

2013

Amendment approved 17th December 2013

THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

Institutional Human Research Ethics Approval

Project Title:	Being And Becoming Musical: Towards A Cultural Ecological Model Of Early Musical Development - 16/12/2013 - AMENDMENT
Chief Investigator:	Prof Margaret Barrett
Supervisor:	None
Co-Investigator(s):	Prof Graham Welch, Ms Vicky Abad
School(s):	Music
Approval Number:	2013001040
Granting Agency/Degree:	ARC Discovery Grant
Duration:	31st August 2016

Comments/Conditions:

Note: This approval is for amendments to an already approved protocol for which a UQ Clinical Trials Protocol Insurance Form was originally submitted. Hence the researchers must already notify the UQ Insurance Office of any changes to that Form and Participant Information Sheets & Consent Forms as a result of the amendments, before action.

Name of responsible Committee:
Behavioural & Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee
This project complies with the provisions contained in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* and complies with the regulations governing experimentation on humans.

Name of Ethics Committee representative:
Associate Professor John McLean
Chairperson
Behavioural & Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee

Signature _____ Date 17/12/2013

Amendment approved 5 March, 2014

THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

Institutional Human Research Ethics Approval

Project Title:	Being And Becoming Musical: Towards A Cultural Ecological Model Of Early Musical Development - 05/03/2014 - AMENDMENT
Chief Investigator:	Prof Margaret Barrett
Supervisor:	None
Co-Investigator(s):	Prof Graham Welch, Ms Vicky Abad
School(s):	Music
Approval Number:	2013001040
Granting Agency/Degree:	ARC Discovery Grant
Duration:	31st August 2016

Comments/Conditions:

Note: if this approval is for amendments to an already approved protocol for which a UQ Clinical Trials Protection/Insurance Form was originally submitted, then the researchers must directly notify the UQ Insurance Office of any changes to that Form and Participant Information Sheets & Consent Forms as a result of the amendments, before action.

Name of responsible Committee:
Behavioural & Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee
This project complies with the provisions contained in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* and complies with the regulations governing experimentation on humans.

Name of Ethics Committee representative:
Associate Professor John McLean
Chairperson
Behavioural & Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee

Signature _____ Date 6/3/2014

END